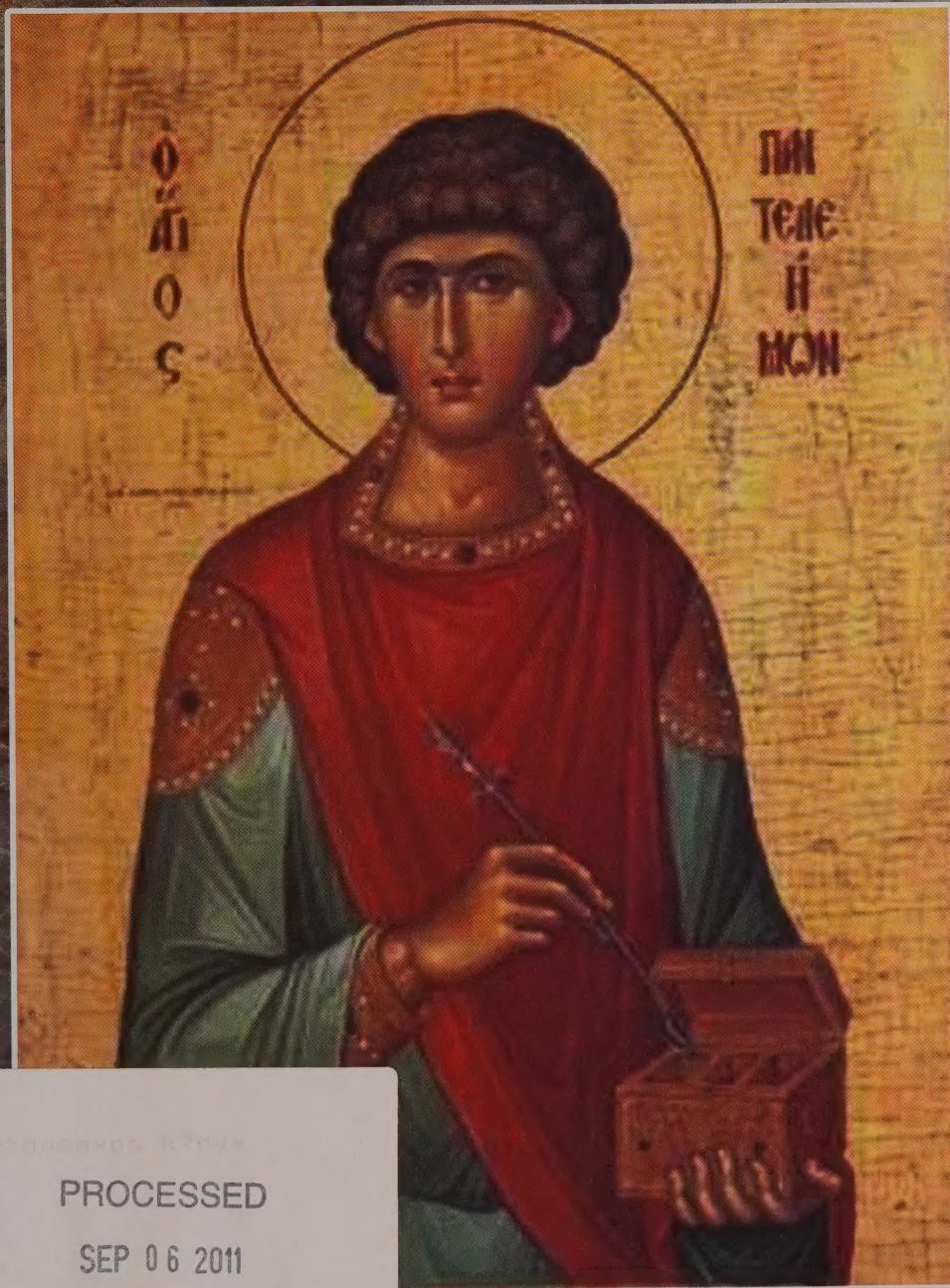


ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΚΗΡΥΞ

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΝ ΟΡΓΑΝΟΝ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗΣ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΗΣ ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ

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Ηα Ορθοδοξος Κηρυκος

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ΜΟΝΟ ΣΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ:
Greek Archdiocese Of Thyateira And Great Britain

Ἐγκύλιο Γράμμα τοῦ Σεβασμιωτάτου Ἄρχιεπισκόπου κ. Γρηγορίου πρός τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο Πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Θυατείρων καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας μέ τήν εὐκαιρία τῆς Ἱερᾶς καὶ χαρούσσυνης Περιόδου τοῦ Δεκαπενταυγούστου.

Ἄγαπητοί μας ἐν Κυρίῳ

Ἐν ταῖς ζάλαις, ἐφεῦρόν σε λιμένα ἐν ταῖς λύπαις,
χαράν καὶ εὐφροσύνην, καὶ ἐν ταῖς νόσοις ταχινῆ
βοήθειαν καὶ ἐν τοῖς κινδύνοις, ὁύστιν καὶ προστάτιν ἐν
τοῖς πειρατηρίοις.

Μέ τήν εἶσοδό μας στό μῆνα Αὔγουστο, κατά παράδοση
ἡ Ὁρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία μας ψάλλει στούς Ναούς, κάθε
βράδυ, τούς κατανυκτικούς Παρακλητικούς Κανόνες πρός
τήν Παναγία Θεοτόκο καὶ Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Θά
ψάλλουμε καὶ φέτος τά θαυμάσια αὐτά καὶ ἐμπνευσμένα
Τραγούδια, τούς ὕμνους, πού φωτισμένοι ὑμνογράφοι
πρὸν ἀπό πολλούς αἰώνες συνέγραψαν καὶ ἔκτοτε
χιλιοτραγούδησαν μισιούδες Ὁρθόδοξων Χριστιανῶν γιά
να τιμῆσουν τήν Μάνα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ νά διακηρύξουν
τήν ἀγιοταράδοτη διδασκαλία καὶ πίστη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας
στό πρόσωπο Της. Οἱ Ἀκολουθίες αὐτές τελοῦνται τίς
πρώτες μέρες τοῦ Αὔγουστου ώς Ἱερή προσφορά τῶν
πιστῶν πρός τήν Παναγία, Μάνα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἡ δόπια
δέχθηκε στά σπλάχνα της τόν Σωτῆρα τοῦ Γένους ἡμῶν,
Θεάνθρωπον Χριστόν. Οἱ ὕμνοι γράφτηκαν καὶ ψάλ-
λονται σ' αὐτήν τήν περίοδο τοῦ Δεκαπενταυγούστου,
πού οἱ Χριστιανοί γιορτάζουμε τήν Κοίμηση τῆς
Παναγίας, τήν ἀποκλήσης τῆς δηλαδή ἀπό τήν σκηνή^ν
τούτου τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τήν ἔνδον τῆς στούς οὐρανούς γιά
να ἐνωθεῖ γιά πάντα με τόν Μονογενή Υἱό Της Χριστού.
Ὅπως κάθε πλάσμα, πού ἔρχεται σε τοῦτον τόν κόσμο,
πεθαίνει καὶ «έπιστρέφει εἰς τήν γῆν ἐξ ἡς ἐλήφθη», ἔτσι
καὶ ἡ Παναγία δέχθηκε τό κεντρό τοῦ θανάτου καὶ αὐτό
ἀκριβῶς τό γεγονός γιορτάζουμε θεωρώντας το ὡς
δρόσημο στήν ιστορία καὶ τήν ζωή τῆς Μίας, Ἁγίας,
Καθολικῆς καὶ Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τής δόπιας
Κεφαλῆ καὶ Κύριος είναι ὁ Χριστός. Ο ἴδιος ὁ Χριστός
γεύτηκε τό κεντρό τοῦ θανάτου γιά νά διλοκληρώσει τήν
παγκόσμια ἀποστολή Του γιά τήν σωτηρία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
καὶ τήν ἐπιστροφή Του «πάλιν εἰς τόν Παράδεισον».

Δέν είναι βέβαια τυχαίον ὅτι ἐμεῖς οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι
Χριστιανοί, πού είμαστε οἱ Χριστιανοί τῆς Ἀναστάσεως,
γιορτάζουμε κατά τόπον μεγαλοπερή καὶ χαρούσσυνο
τήν Κοίμηση τῆς Παναγίας, καὶ τήν γιορτή αὐτή τήν
θεωρούμε ώς τό Πάσχα τοῦ καλοκαιριού. Δέν είναι τυχαίο
ἐπίσης ὅτι οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί γιά δεκαπέντε μέρες
γιορτάζουμε καὶ κάθε βράδυ ψάλλουμε στίς Ἐκκλησίες
καὶ τά σπίτια μας τήν Μικρήν καὶ τήν Μεγάλην Παρακληση
τῆς Παναγίας καὶ μαζί με τῶν ἐστεμένων ποιητήν
ἐπαναλαμβάνουμε «Τῶν λυπηρῶν ἐπαγωγαί χειμάζουσι
τήν ταπεινήν μου ψυχήν καὶ συμφορῶν νέφη τήν ἐμήν
καλύπτουσι καρδιάν, Θεονύμφευτε».

Δέν μένει λοιπόν ἀσυγκόνητη ἡ προσευχομένη, καὶ
στρατευομένη Ἐκκλησία, μπροστά στόν πόνο καὶ τόν
θάνατον, μπροστά στίς πολυποίκιλες δοκιμασίες καὶ

συμφορές, τίς ἀρρώστιες, τούς πολέμους, τίς αἰχμαλωσίες
καὶ ὅλα τά λυπηρά πού μαστίζουν καθημερινά τήν
κοινωνία. Οἱ Ὅμνοι τῆς Ιερᾶς Παρακλήσεως είναι γεμάτοι
ἀνθρωπιά, δίνουν παρηγοριαν καὶ θάρρος στόν πονεμένο
καὶ ἀνήσυχον ἀπό τίς μεριμνές τοῦ βίου ἀνθρώπῳ.
Ἐνπούν μέσα του τήν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ τό πνεῦμα
τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ καλωσύνης τοῦ Θεοῦ πού πρέπει νά
πρυτανεύει στήν ζωή του, τήν προσωπική καὶ τήν
δημόσια. Ή λέξη 'παρακληση' κρύβει μέσα της ἔνα
πνευματικό, οὐδάνιο ἀγγελικό κόσμο καὶ ὑπενθυμίζει
ἰκετευτικά τήν μυστική σχέση μας με τόν Θεό, καὶ τήν
ἀγάπη καὶ τό φῶς, τά δόπια είναι ποτισμένα ἀπό τήν
χάριν καὶ τήν κοινωνία τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Τό Ἁγιον
Πνεῦμα μαλακώνει τούς πόνους καὶ ἀναπτερώνει τίς
χαμένες ἐλπίδες διώχνει τόν φόβον τοῦ θανάτου καὶ
ἀνυψώνει τήν ψυχή μας στόν οὐρανό σκοοπίζει ταύτη
καὶ τά ἀμάρτωλά πάθη πού φωλιάζουν στά βάθη τοῦ
είναι μας. Ὅπως χαρακτηριστικά λέγει ὁ θεῖος Παῦλος
«Τό Πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει ὑπέρ ημῶν στεναγμοῖς
ἀλαλήτοις» (Ρωμ. Κεφ. 8, 26) γιά τήν δική μας παρηγορία
καὶ ψυχική γαλήνη καὶ σωτηρία.

Νά τρεξούμε, λοιπόν, στίς Ἐκκλησίες καὶ νά ἐνωσούμε
τίς προσευχές μας με ἑκεῖνες τῆς Παναγίας καὶ ἑκεῖνες τῶν
Ἄγιων καὶ ὅλων τῶν Πιστῶν τοῦ Κόσμου. Νά
γονατίσουμε μέ εὐλάβεια μπροστά στό εἰκόνισμα τῆς
Θεοτόκου καὶ νά ζητήσουμε τίς μεσιτείες της γιά τήν
οἰκογενεία μας γιά τούς φιλούς καὶ γιά τούς ἐχθρούς μας,
γιά τούς Ἀρχοντες τῆς Ἑλλάδος, τῆς Κύπρου, τῆς Μεγάλης
Βρετανίας καὶ ὅλης τῆς Οἰκουμένης, στά χέρια τῶν ὅπιών
ενδιόσκεται ή τύχη καὶ ή πρόσδοτος τῶν λαῶν. Μήν
λημονούμε ὅτι ή πίστη στό Θεό, δύως καὶ ή προσευχή,
είναι ἀνίκητα δύλα στόν ἀγῶνα μας γιά τήν εἰρήνη καὶ
τήν εὐημερία τοῦ Σύμπαντος Κόσμου. Εναποθέτουμε τόν
εαυτό μας στήν πρόνοια τοῦ ἐν Τριάδι δεδοξασμένου
Θεοῦ καὶ λαμπροφανῶς γιορτάζουμε τήν Κοίμηση τῆς
Κυρίας Τριάδος, καὶ μαζί με τόν θυμωδόν,
ἐπαναλαμβάνουμε: «Δέσποινα καὶ μήτηρ τοῦ Λυτρωτοῦ,
δέξαι παρακλήσεις ἀνατξίων σῶν ἰκετῶν, ἵνα μεσιτεύσῃς
πρός τόν ἐκ σοῦ τεχθέντα ὡς Δέσποινα τοῦ κόσμου, γενοῦ
μεσίτιοια».

Μέ τίς προεβεῖς, Κύριε, τήν Παναγίας Μάνας Σου,
ἐλέησε καὶ σῶσε τόν Κόσμον Σου ώς μόνος ἀγαθός καὶ
φιλάνθρωπος καὶ ἐλεήμων Θεός Αὐτήν.

Λονδίνο, Αὔγουστος 2011

τοῦ Ιωνακίου καὶ Μ. Β. Φραγκίσου

Ο Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων
καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας Γρηγόριος

ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ ΣΕΒΑΣΜΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΗΣ ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ κ. ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ "ΤΟ ΤΡΑΓΙΚΟ 1974"

Εύλαβεστάτους Ίερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, Ἀξιοτίμους
Προεδρους καὶ τά Μέλη

τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Ἐπιτροπῶν, τῶν Συλλόγων
καὶ Ὀργανώσεων, καὶ τό Χριστεπώνυμο Πλήρωμα
τῶν Κοινοτήτων τῆς Ίερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς
Θυατείρων καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας καὶ Ἰρλανδίας.

Ἄγαπητοί μας ἐν Κυρίῳ,

Ἄπευθύνουμε τήν παροῦσα, μέ τήν εὐκαιρία τῆς
όδυνηρῆς ἐπετείου τῶν τραγικῶν γεγονότων τοῦ
Ιουλίου-Αύγουστου 1974, τά ὅποια εἶχαν ώς
ἀποτέλεσμα τήν κατοχή μεγάλου μέρους τῆς
μαρτυρικῆς μας Μεγαλονήσου Κύπρου καὶ τήν
ἐκρίζωση ἀπό τής πατρικές τους ἑστίες ἐκατοντάδων
χιλιάδων κατοίκων τῆς.

Αὐτές οἱ μέρες τῆς Ἐπετείου τοῦ Πραδικοπήματος
καὶ τῆς Τουρκικῆς εἰσβολῆς, εἶναι μέρες προσευχῆς καὶ
πνευματικῆς περισυλλογῆς ὅλων τῶν ἐπί γῆς Ἐλλήνων.
Οἱ ἐπέτειοι, πού κάθε χρόνο ἔορτάζουμε οἱ Πανελλήνες,
εἶναι κυρίως ἡμερομηνίες καὶ γεγονότα, γιά τά ὅποια
ὑπερηφανεύομαστε. Ὁχι, δύναση, καὶ αὐτά τοῦ Ιουλίου
καὶ τοῦ Αύγουστου 1974. Ή ἐπέτειος αὐτή εἶναι, – καί
πρέπει νά μήν τό ξεχνᾶμε ποτέ αὐτό, – μία ὄδυνηρη
ἀνάμνηση, ἀλλά καὶ μία ἀκόμη εὐκαιρία ίερᾶς
αὐτοκριτικῆς καὶ περίσκεψης καὶ ἀνανέωσης τῆς
μακαρίας ἐπιπδος καὶ ἀποφασιστικότητος: Δέν ξεχνᾶμε
τήν εἰσβολή! Δέν ξεχνᾶμε τά ἀπαράβατα δίκαια καὶ
δικαιώματα τοῦ λαοῦ τῆς Κύπρου νά ζήσει φιλειρηνικά
καὶ δημιουργικά. Καλούμαστε, λοιπόν, νά
διατρανώσουμε γιά μία ἀκόμα φορά ὅτι θά ζήσουμε,
θά διαφυλάξουμε καὶ θά συνεχίσουμε τήν μακραίωνα
ιστορική καὶ πολιτιστική κληρονομιά, τήν ὅποια
ἐπλούτισαν μέ τό Μήνυμα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου τῆς ἀγάπης
πού ἔφεραν στήν Κύπρο, πρίν δύο χιλιάδες χρόνια,
οἱ Μεγάλοι Ἀπόστολοι Βαρνάβας, Παῦλος καὶ Ἰωάννης
Μᾶρκος.

Ὄμως αὐτό το «δέν ξεχνᾶ» στέφεται πάντοτε μέ
ἐπιτύχια καὶ ἀποτελεσματικότητα ὅταν είμαστε
ἀγαπημένοι, ἀποβάλουμε ἀπό μέσα μας καὶ γύρω μας
τό μῆσος, τήν κακία, τόν φθόνο, ὅταν μεταξύ μας

καλλιεργοῦμε τήν συνεργασία καὶ τήν ὄμονοια, ὅταν
ἀναλογιζόμαστε ὅτι οἱ καταπατημένοι Τόποι καὶ τά οἱ
Ἐκκλησίες μας, τότε μόνον ἀπελευθερώνονται, ὅταν
είμαστε ἐμεῖς ἔτοιμοι νά ἀναλάβουμε ὁ καθένας τής
εὐθύνες καὶ τίς ὑποχρεώσεις του καὶ νά
ἐμπιστευθοῦμε μέ πίστη καὶ αὐταπάρνηση τόν Θεό
γιά τήν δικαίωσή μας.

Καλοῦμε, λοιπόν, ἄπασαν τήν Ὁμογένεια τοῦ
Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου σέ κοινό ἐκκλησιασμό, νά μετάσχει
στής προσευχές καὶ τά Μνημόσυνα πού θά γίνουν
στούς Ίερούς Ναούς μας αύτές τής μέρες, γιά τήν
ἀνάπταυση ὅλων ἑκίνων, οἱ ὅποιοι έδωσαν τήν ζωή
τους γιά τήν ἐλευθερία, τήν πατριδα, τήν δημοκρατία
καὶ τά ἰδεώδη του Γένους. Νά προσευχηθοῦμε γιά τούς
πρόσφυγες, τούς ἀγνοούμενους καὶ τούς ξεριζωμένους
ἀδελφούς μας. Νά μνημονεύσουμε μέ εὐλάβεια καὶ
σεβασμό τούς ναῦτες καὶ πυροσβέστες πού ἔχασαν
τήν ζωή τους στό μεγάλο τραγικό δυστύχημα τῆς
Δευτέρας, 11 Ιουνίου 2011, στήν ναυτική βάση τῆς
Κύπρου καὶ νά προσευχηθοῦμε γιά τής οίκογένειες
πού τόσον σκληρά ἔχασαν πρόσωπα προσφιλῆ καὶ
ἀγαπημένα στό ἀνθος τής ἡλικίας τους. Καλούμαστε
ἐπίσης ὅλοι στήν φιλειρηνική ἐκδήλωση πού ὅργανωνει,
ὅπως κάθε χρόνο, ή Ἐθνική Κυπριακή Όμοσπονδία
Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου στό Trafalgar Square τοῦ Λονδίνου,
τήν Κυριακή, 17 Ιουλίου 2011, στής 3:00μμ, ὅπου θά
μιλήσει ὁ Κυβερνητικός ἐκπρόσωπος τής Κυπριακῆς
Δημοκρατίας κ. Στ. Στεφάνου καὶ Βρετανοί Βουλευτές,
φίλοι καὶ ύπερασπιστές τῶν δικαίων τής Κύπρου.

Εύχόμενοι δέ σε δόλους καὶ δλες σας Καλό Καλοκαίρι,
εἰρηνικές διακοπές καὶ ύγεια καὶ δύναμη γιά νά
συνεχίσετε νά ἐνδιαφέρεστε γιά μία Κύπρο ἐνωμένη
καὶ ἀδιάρπητ καὶ τήν ἐπικράτηση στό Νησί τῶν Ἅγιων,
τής γαλάνης, τῆς προόδου καὶ εὐημερίας, διατελοῦμε
μετά πολλῆς ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγάπης καὶ θερμῶν εὐχῶν.

Λονδίνο, Ιούλιος 2011

τού Ιωάννου καὶ Μ. Βαρνάβα

‘Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων
καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας Γρηγόριος

ΕΚΘΕΣΙΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΤΡΙΤΗΣ ΣΥΝΑΝΤΗΣΕΩΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΝΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΥ ΣΥΝΕΛΕΥΣΕΩΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΧΟΝΤΩΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΕΝ ΤΑΙΣ ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΚΑΙΣ ΝΗΣΟΙΣ

Η Τρίτη Συνάντησις τῆς Πανορθοδόξου Συνελεύσεως τῶν Ἐπισκόπων τῶν ἔχοντων Ἑκκλησίας ἐν ταῖς Βρετανικαῖς Νήσοις ἔλαβε χώραν τὴν Πέμπτην, 30ην Ἰουνίου 2011, ἐν τῷ Ἱερῷ Ναῷ τῶν Ἅγιών Δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων, Hatfield, Hertfordshire. Πρό τῆς Συναντήσεως, οἱ Ἐπίσκοποι συνελειτούργησαν κατά τὴν διάρκειαν τῆς Θείας Λειτουργίας ἐπί τῇ εὐκαιρίᾳ τῆς Ἑορταζούσης φιλοξενούσης Κοινόπτητος.

Οι κάτωθι Ἐπίσκοποι παρέστησαν εἰς τὴν συνεδρίαν:

- Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγόριος
(τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως)
- Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Σουρώζ κ. Ἐλισσαδίος
(τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Μόσχας)
- Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Δυτικῆς καὶ Νοτίου Εύρωπης κ. Ἰωσήφ
(τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Ρουμανίας)
- Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Βερολίνου, Γερμανίας καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας κ. Μᾶρκος
(τῆς Ὑπερορίου Ὁρθοδόξου Ρωσικῆς Ἑκκλησίας)
- Ὁ Πανιερώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Kerch κ. Ἀνατόλιος
(τῆς Ἐπισκοπῆς Σουρώζ)
- Ὁ Θεοφιλέστατος Ἐπίσκοπος Τροπαιού κ. Ἀθανάσιος
(τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Θυατείρων).

Δέν ἡδυνήθησαν ἵνα παραστῶσιν οἱ κάτωθι:

- Ὁ Πανιερώτατος Μητροπολίτης Δυτικῆς καὶ Κεντρώας Εύρωπης κ. Ἰωάννης
(τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Ἀντιοχείας)
- Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἐπίσκοπος Μεγάλης Βρετανίας καὶ Σκανδινανίας κ. Dositej
(τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Σερβίας)
- Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Dmanisi καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας κ. Ζήνων
(τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Γεωργίας)
- Ὁ Πανιερώτατος Μητροπολίτης Κεντρώας καὶ Δυτικῆς Εύρωπης κ. Συμεών
(τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Βουλγαρίας)
- Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἐπίσκοπος Παρνασσοῦ κ. Ἰωάννης
(τῆς Οὐκρανικῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐπισκοπῆς ἐν Μεγάλῃ Βρετανίᾳ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου)
- Ὁ Πανιερώτατος Μητροπολίτης Διοκλείας κ. Κάλλιστος
(τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Θυατείρων), καὶ
- Ὁ Θεοφιλέστατος Ἐπίσκοπος Κυανέων κ. Χρυσόστομος
(τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Θυατείρων).

Παρέστησαν ὡσαύτως εἰς τὴν Συνάντησιν οἱ κάτωθι:

- Ὁ Αἰδεσιμολογιώτατος Πρωτοπρεσβύτερος Samir

Gholam

(ώς ἐκπρόσωπος τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Δυτικῆς καὶ Κεντρώας Εύρωπης κ. Ἰωάννου)

- Ὁ Αἰδεσιμώτατος Dragan Lazic

(ώς ἐκπρόσωπος τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου Μεγάλης Βρετανίας καὶ Σκανδινανίας κ. Dositej)

- Ὁ Πανοσιολογιώτατος Ἀρχιμανδρίτης κ. Βασίλειος Παπαβασιλείου, (Γραμματεύς)

Ἡ Συνάντησις τῶν Ἐπισκόπων ἤρξατο μετά τὰ πανηγυρικά γεῦμα, τό προσφερθέν ύπό τῆς φιλοξενούσης Κοινόπτητος.

Οἱ Ἐπίσκοποι συνεζήτησαν τά κάτωθι θέματα:

Α) Οἱ ποικίλοι τρόποι, οἱ ἀκολουθούμενοι ὑπό τῶν Ἐπισκόπων, προπαρασκευῆς τῆς Θείας Κοινωνίας, καὶ οἱ κανονισμοί ἀναφορικῶς πρός τούς μικτούς γάμους, ως καὶ ἡ δυνατότης συμπεφωνημένης θέσεως ἐπί τῶν ἀνωτέρω θεμάτων.

Β) Γλυκόν διά κατήχησιν καὶ ἡ ἐκπαίδευσις κληρικῶν καὶ καπηλητῶν.

Γ) Κανονικά θέματα ἀναφορικῶς πρός τὴν μεταπήδησιν καὶ τάς ἐπισκέψεις κληρικῶν ἐκ τῆς μιᾶς εἰς τὴν ἄλλην Ἐπισκοπήν.

Δ) Η προοπτική διά μίαν Πανορθόδοξον Σύναξιν.

Οἱ Ἐπίσκοποι ἀπεφάσισαν ὅπως:

1. Ἡ Ποιμαντική Ἐπιτροπή τῆς Συνελεύσεως (προεδρευομένη ὑπό τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἐλισσαδίου) ὀφεῖλει ὅπως ἐτοιμάσῃ ποιμαντικάς εἰσηγήσεις ἀναφορικῶς πρός: α) τὴν προπαρασκευήν τῆς Θείας Κοινωνίας, β) τούς μικτούς γάμους, καὶ γ) τὴν μεταπήδησιν κληρικῶν ἐκ τῆς μιᾶς εἰς τὴν ἄλλην Ἐπισκοπήν.

2. Ἡ ἐκπαίδευτική Ἐπιτροπή τῆς Συνελεύσεως (προεδρευομένη ὑπό τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Γρηγορίου) ὀφεῖλει ὅπως ἔξετάσῃ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα φυλλάδια καὶ ἔντυπα περί τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἑκκλησίας, τὴν Πίστιν καὶ τὰ Ἱερά Μυστήρια αὐτῆς, πρός μελέτην ὑπό τῆς Ἐπισκοπικῆς Συνελεύσεως.

Ἡ ἐπομένη Ἐπισκοπική Συνέλευσις:

Ἡ ἐπομένη Ἐπισκοπική Συνέλευσις θά λάβῃ χώραν τὴν Πέμπτην, 24ην Νοεμβρίου 2011, ἐν τῷ Ἑλληνικῷ Καθεδρικῷ Ναῷ Κοιμήσεως τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ Ἅγιών Πάντων τῆς Ρωσικῆς Ἑκκλησίας.

Ἐν Λονδίνῳ, τῇ 1ῃ Ἰουλίου 2011.

”Έργα ἀγάπης

Τοῦ Σεβ. Μητροπολίτου Καβάσων κ. Φιλήμονος
Πατριαρχείου Ἀλεξανδρείας

Σασική καί ἀσύγκριτη προϋπόθεση γιά τὸν Χριστιανισμό είναι ἡ ἔννοια τῆς ἀγάπης, ποὺ ἀποτέλεσε, καὶ γιὰ τὸν Χριστό καὶ γιὰ τοὺς διαδόχους Του, τὸ ποὺ ἰσχυρότατο σύμβολο στὴν πορεία τους. Καὶ δέν είναι μιὰ ἀπλῆ ἀνθρωπιστική ἐκδήλωση ἡ χριστιανικὴ ἀγάπη, ἀλλ' ἔχει βαθύτερο περιεχόμενο, ἐπειδὴ είναι μιὰ ἀντανακλαστικὴ φανέρωση τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ, ποὺ πρῶτος μᾶς ἀγάπησε.

Δέν ύπάρχει πιὸ μεγαλύτερη δύναμι καὶ πιὸ δυνατὴ ἀρετὴ ἀπό τὴν ἀγάπη ἀφοῦ σὲ τελικὴ ἀνάλυση ἀξιολογήσεως ὅλων τῶν ἀρετῶν ἔχει τὸ προβάδισμα, καὶ αὐτὴ είναι ἐκείνη ποὺ θά θεσει τὴ βάση καὶ θά ἀποτελέσει τὸ κριτήριο καὶ τὸ ἀντικείμενο στὴν Κρίσι τοῦ Θεοῦ ὅταν θά γίνει ἡ τελικὴ κρίσι τοῦ διαλογῆ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Αὐτὴ θά μποροῦσε κανεὶς νά πει, ὀδήγησε τὸν Ἀπ. Παῦλο νά τὴν ὑμνήσει καὶ νά τὴν παρουσιάσει σάν τὸ βασικότερο γνώρισμα κάθε χριστιανοῦ, μ' ἐκεῖνα τὰ σοφρὰ του λόγια ποὺ ἀπηγύθησαν στοὺς Κορινθίους, βεβαιώνοντάς τους γιὰ τὴ μεγάλη καὶ ἀθάνατη ἀξία τῆς. Αὐτὴ μέ τὴν ἀπεριόριστη δύναμι τῆς, ἔγινε ὁ συνδετικὸς κρίκος ἐπαφῆς μεταξύ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ στὴ συνέχεια, τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέ τὸ Θεό. Κατόρθωσε δέ ὁ ἀνθρωπὸς μέ ἔργα ἀγάπης, ἀγάπης ἀνιδιοτελοῦς, νά μοιάσει μέ τὸν ἴδιο τὸν Θεό, ποὺ είναι ὅλος ἀγάπη. Αὐτὴ γνώρισαν καὶ αὐτὴ καλλιέργησαν κι ἀπ' αὐτῆς τὰ πλοκάμια πάστηκαν οἱ θεμελιώτες τῆς μέσα στὴ χριστιανικὴ κοινωνία. Οἱ «ἀγάπης» τῆς ἐποχῆς τῶν Ἀποστόλων, τί ἄλλο υπῆρξαν παρὰ ἀσκηση σ' ἔργα ἀγάπης, πούβρισκαν τροφή καὶ στοργή οἱ κουρασμένοι καὶ πεινασμένοι τῆς ζωῆς. Ἡ «Λογία» ἔπειτα, ποὺ τὴν καθιέρωσε ὁ θεῖος Ἀπόστολος τῶν Θεῦντων Παῦλος, ὑποχρεώνοντας τοὺς χριστιανούς νά προσφέρουν ὁ καθένας τους ὅτι μποροῦσε γιὰ τοὺς πάσχοντες στὶς ἐκκλησίες τῆς Γαλατίας καὶ τῆς Κορίνθου, τί ἦταν παρὰ ἔργα ἐμπρακτῆς ἀγάπης. Τὰ γνωστά μεγάλα τότε κέντρα τῆς Ρώμης, Ἀλεξανδρείας, Ἀντιοχείας, Κωνσταντινούπολεως, τί ἀλλο ἦταν παρὰ ἑστίες, μέσα στὶς ὅποιες τροφοδοτεῖτο ἡ καλωσύνη καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία, πού ἦταν ἀποκύμα ἀγάπης. Νά, γιατὶ ἡ ἀγάπη, ἔγραψε τὴν ὡραιότερη ἱστορία μέσα στὸν κόσμο!

Φυσικά δέν θά πρέπει νά μᾶς διαφεύγει ἡ ἀπεριόριστη πρός τὸν Οὐράνιο Πατέρα καὶ θεό μας ἀγάπη καὶ εὐγνωμοσύνη. Αὐτὸν πρῶτα ἀπ' ὅλα ὀφελούμε ν' ἀγαπήσουμε γιὰ τὸ μεγάλο δῶρο ποὺ μᾶς χάρισε καὶ ποὺ μ' αὐτὸ μποροῦμε ν' ἀγαπήσουμε καὶ τὸν συνάνθρωπό μας.

Ἡ ἀληθινὴ ἀγάπη μας πρός τὸν ἀνθρωπὸ, ἔχει σὰν ξεκίνημα, σὰν ἀφεπτρία, τὴν ἀγάπη μας πρός τὸν θεό. Διότι, χωρὶς ἀγάπη στὸν θεό, δέν μπορεῖ νά σταθεῖ ἡ ἀγάπη μας πρός τὸν συνάνθρωπὸ μας, ἀφοῦ -σύμφωνα μέ τὴν χριστιανικὴ διδασκαλία- πηγὴ τῆς ἀγάπης είναι ὁ ἴδιος ὁ θεός. Είναι δύο πνευματικές ἐνότητες ἀπόλυτα δεμένες μεταξύ τους, ἀγάπη πρός τὸν θεό καὶ ἀγάπη πρός τὸν ἀνθρωπὸ. Οἱ ἀκριβῶς ἀναφέρουν οἱ Πατέρες τῆς ἐκκλησίας μας καὶ συγκεκριμένα, ὅτι γράφει ὁ Μέγας Βασιλεὺς, πάνω στὸ ἀνεξάντλητο αὐτὸ κεφάλαιο περὶ ἀγάπης. Ἀναφέρει λοιπόν ὅτι, ὅπως μιὰ ψυχὴ χωρὶς σῶμα δέν μπορεῖ νάναι

ἀνθρωπὸς, οὔτε πάλι σῶμα χωρὶς ψυχὴ, ἔτοι καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη στὸν θεό δέν είναι ἀγάπη ἀν δέν συνοδεύεται καὶ μ' ἀγάπη πρός τὸν συνάνθρωπὸ μας. «Θά εῖσθε μαθηταὶ μου -τονίζει ὁ κύριος- ἀν ἔχετε μεταξύ σας ἀγάπη». Οὔτε μπορεῖ νά υποστρέψει ὁ ἀνθρωπὸς ὅτι ἀγαπᾶ τὸν θεό, ἀλλά νοιώθει μῆσος γιὰ τὸν ἀδελφὸ του, διότι τότε ἀσύστολα φεύγεται.

Οἱ δύο ἀγάπες, πρός τὸν θεό καὶ πρός τὸν ἀνθρωπὸ, μέσα στὰ πλαίσια τῆς χριστιανικῆς διδασκαλίας, βρίσκονται σε ἄμεση σχέση ὅπως ἀναφέρει σύγχρονος θεολόγος τῆς ἐκκλησίας μας. Στὴν προσπάθειά του δέ ὁ κάθε ἀνθρωπὸς γιὰ νά καταλήξει τελικὰ σ' ἔργα ἀγάπης, πρέπει να περάσει διαδοχικά πολλὰ προηγούμενα στάδια, ξεφεύγοντας ἀπό ἡθικές διαβρωτικές καταστάσεις, ὥστε νά δημιουργήσει τὶς προϋποθέσεις ἑκεῖνες γιὰ μιὰ ἀνυπόκριτη μορφὴ ἔργων ἀγάπης. Διότι ἔχουμε φανερές περιπτώσεις ἀνθρώπων ποὺ πιστεύουν ὅτι ἡ ζωὴ τους είναι μιὰ ἐμπρακτή προσφορά ἔργων ἀγάπης, ἐνῶ -ἐν γνώσει ἡ ἔν ἀγνοία τους- ζυδὸν μέσα σ' ἔνα κύκλωμα ἀνεβλικρίνειας καὶ φοβερῆς ὑποκρισίας.

Πρέπει πλέον νά καταλάβουμε τὶς εὐθύνες μας γιὰ τὴν ὑπέρτατη αὐτὴ ἀρετὴν. Χρειάζεται νά μεταβληθεῖ, καὶ σε μᾶς ὅλους, σε μία ἐνεργοποιούμενη μορφὴ δυνάμεως καὶ δράσεως. Διότι κατάντησε στὰ χρόνια μας, αὐτὴ ἡ κορωνίδα ὅλων τῶν ἀρετῶν, νά είναι ξερή καὶ στεγνή καὶ στερεὰ σ' ἐκδηλώσεις καὶ σε πράξεις. Ἐφθασε μέσα στους κόλπους τῆς ἡ ἀγάπη νά δέχεται σπέρματα τελείως ἔνα τῆς συστάσεώς τῆς, πῆς προσελύσεώς της καὶ τοῦ προορισμοῦ τῆς. Ἐνα νέφος γεμάτο ἀπό μαῦρα σύννεφα φεύγτικης καὶ ἐπικινδύνης ἀγάπης σκιάζει τὴ δροσιά τῆς. Ἀπουσιάζει ἡ γνήσια χριστιανικὴ ἀγάπη καὶ φυσικά καὶ τὰ ἔργα τῆς.

«Ολοὶ μιλάμε γ' αὐτὸ τὸ καυτὸ θέμα καὶ δλοὶ μας παιίρνουμε θέση, ἀλλὰ πόσοι, ἐκείνη τὴ στιγμὴ, είναι συνεπεῖς μ' ὅσα υποστρέψουν καὶ ἐπικροτοῦν; Πλαντοῦ, ἀντί γιὰ ἔργα ἀγάπης, ὁ ἀνθρωπὸς σκορπτὸ τὸ μῆσον του καὶ τὴ φαυλότητά του. Καὶ είναι ἀπό τὰ ἐγκλήματα ἑκεῖνα πού καμμιαὶ ἀνθρώπινη νομοθεσία δέν μπορεῖ νά τιμωρήσει καὶ ἔτοι τὸ κακὸ ἐξαπλώνεται. Ἐξαπλώνεται καὶ δέν έρουμε ποῦ τελικὰ θά φθάσουμε. Οἱ καιροὶ μας πολλὰ φανερά σημεῖα παρουσιάζουν αὐτῆς τῆς ἐλλείψεως ἀπό ἔργα ἀγάπης. Πίσσο διαφορετικὴ θάταν ἡ ζωὴ μας ἀν μποροῦσαν καὶ σήμερα νά παρουσιαστοῦν μερικοὶ ἔστω καλοί σαμαρέτες! Νά βρεθοῦν ἀνθρωποὶ μέ ἀνόθευτη δρμή γιὰ ἔργα καὶ θυσίες, ἔχοντας σάν σκοπὸ τους τὸ στέγνωμα ἀπό τὰ βουρκωμένα μάτια πολλῶν ἀπογοητευμένων διωκομένων ὑπάρκειων. Νά σταθοῦν μέ εἰλικρίνεια καὶ δχι μέ ὑπούλοπτη στὸ πλευρό αὐτῶν πού ἔχουν τὴν ἀνάγκη τους. Τότε οἱ ἐκδηλώσεις τῆς ἀγάπης μας θά ἦταν ἀπαλλαγμένες ἀπό τὸ στοιχεῖο τῆς ιδιοτελείας καὶ τοῦ συμφέροντος. Θά σταματοῦσαν μιὰ γιὰ πάντα τὰ μεγάλα λόγια νά κουράζουν τὶς διψασμένες ψυχές μας γιά λίγη ἀγάπη, ἀγάπη γνήσια καὶ ἀκίνδυνη.

Ἄραγε, θά μπορέσουμε κάποτε νά βροῦμε τὸν δρόμο τῆς ἐμπρακτῆς χριστιανικῆς ἀγάπης, πού μᾶς χάραξε ὁ ἰδρυτής Της; Θά νοιώσουμε τὴν ἀνάγκη ἐπι τέλους νά διοκληρωθοῦμε καὶ ψυχικά καὶ σάν ἄπομα καὶ σάν χριστιανοί; Ἄς τὸ ἀποφασίσουμε, είναι πλέον καιρός!

Τό Μυστήριο τῆς Βάπτισης

Διακόνου Κωνσταντίνου Θεοχάρους

M

Είναι θεοσύστατα τά Μυστήρια ἐπειδή τά ἰδρυσε εἴτε ὁ ἕιδος ὁ Θεάνθρωπος, εἴτε οἱ Ἀπόστολοι βασισμένοι στίς πράξεις καὶ τή διδασκαλία τοῦ Κυρίου, δόηγούμενοι από τό Ἅγιο Πνεῦμα. Τά Μυστήρια ἔχουν σκοπό τόν ἀγιασμό τῶν μελῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τήν ἔνωσή τους μέ τόν Οὐράνιο Πατέρα. Είναι ἀγωγοί ψυχικῆς ἀνακαίνισης καὶ πνευματικῆς ζωῆς πού ὀδηγεῖ στήν σωτηρία τῆς ψυχῆς.

Όνομάζονται Μυστήρια ἐπειδή αὐτό πού τελεῖται καὶ μεταφέρουν είναι μυστικό καὶ ἀθέατο στούς φυσικούς ὀφθαλμούς, δηλ. ὁ ἀνθρωπος δέν μπορεῖ νά ἀντιληφθεῖ μέ τίς ἔξωτερικές του αἰσθήσεις τή μεταβίβαση καὶ λειτουργία τῆς χάριτος στήν ψυχή του. Κατά συνέπεια, τά Μυστήρια ἔχουν διπλό χαρακτήρα, ἔξωτερικό καὶ ἐσωτερικό, πού ἀποτελεῖ τό διακριτικό χαρακτηριστικό τοῦ μυστηρίου. Σύμφωνα μέ τό χαρακτήρα αὐτό, τά Μυστήρια ἔχουν ταυτόχρονα τό δρατο καὶ ἀόρατο στοιχεῖο.

Τά Μυστήρια τελοῦνται μόνο ἀπό τόν ἐπίσκοπο καὶ τόν πρεσβύτερο πού ἔχουν ἀποστολική διαδοχή κατόπιν ἀδείας. Κατά τήν τέλεση τῶν Ἱερῶν μυστηρίων οἱ ἔυχές ἀναγινώσκονται σέ τρίτο ἐνικό πρόσωπο τό ὅποιον δείχνει ὅτι ὁ τελῶν είναι ὁ ἕιδος ὁ Χριστός.

Σύμφωνα μέ τόν κλασικό δρισμό τῶν μυστηρίων, τά Μυστήρια στήν Ὁρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία ἀριθμοῦνται σέ ἐπτά. Ὁ ἀριθμός τῶν ἐπτά μυστηρίων, στήν παράδοση τῆς Ὁρθόδοξης Ἐκκλησίας, ἀναφέρεται γιά πρώτη φορά τόν 13ο αἰώνα. Ἀρκετοί Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δέν προβαίνουν σέ καμία καταμέτρηση τῶν μυστηρίων. Ἀριθμηση τῶν ἐπτά μυστηρίων ἔχουμε στήν σύνοδο τοῦ 1274 στή Λυών.

Αὐτά είναι:

1. Βάπτισμα: Τό Ἱερό Βάπτισμα ἀναγεννᾶ πνευματικά τόν ἀνθρωπο. Είναι μιά ὑποχρεωτική πράξη γιά ὅποιον ἐπιθυμεῖ νά γίνει χριστιανός, πού πραγματοποιεῖται μέ τριπλή κατάδυση σέ νερό, στό σύνομα τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδας καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ, ὁ ἀνθρωπος καθαρίζεται ἀπό κάθε ἀμαρτία. Τελεῖται μόνο μιά φορά.

2. Χρῖσμα: Τό Χρῖσμα είναι τό Μυστήριο πού σφραγίζει

μέ τίς δωρεές καὶ τά χαρίσματα τοῦ παναγίου Πνεύματος τή νέα πνευματική ζωή, πού ἀρχίζει μέ τό βάπτισμα καὶ συνεχίζεται μέ ἕνα βίο θεοφιλῆ καὶ φιλόχριστο. Επίσης τό Μυστήριο αὐτό δέν ἐπαναλαμβάνεται.

3. Μετάνοια: Ή Μετάνοια είναι τό ιερό Μυστήριο πού ἀποκαθιστᾶ τήν πνευματική ύγεια τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅταν αὐτός πού μετανιώνει εἰλικρινά γιά τ' ἀμαρτήματα του καὶ τά ἔξομολογεῖται στόν πνευματικό τῆς Ἐκκλησίας λειτουργό, λαμβάνει ἀφεση ἀμαρτιῶν, γινόμενος καὶ πάλι φίλος καὶ τέκνο ἀγαπητό τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τό Μυστήριο αὐτό ἐπαναλαμβάνεται, ἀνάλογα μέ τίς πνευματικές ἀνάγκες τῶν πιστῶν.

4. Θεία Ευχαριστία: Ή Θεία Εύχαριστία μᾶς τρέφει μέ τό σῶμα καὶ τό αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ μᾶς ἐνώνει μέ τόν Θεό. Οἱ Πατέρες, μᾶς συνιστοῦν πήν συχνή συμμετοχή στήν Θεία Εύχαριστία, διότι αὐτή μεταδίδεται εἰς ἀφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν καὶ ζωῆς αἰώνιον.

5. Ιερωσύνη: Ή Ιερωσύνη είναι τό ιερό Μυστήριο πού χορηγεῖ διά τῆς χειροτονίας στούς κληρικούς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Τό Μυστήριο αὐτό δέν είναι ἐπαναλαμβανόμενο. Δόθηκε ἀπό τόν Ἰησοῦ Χριστό στούς Ἀποστόλους καὶ τελικά τούς ἐπισκόπους. Τό Μυστήριο τῆς Ἱερωσύνης τελεῖται μόνο ἀπό τόν ἐπίσκοπο.

6. Γάμος: Ό Γάμος είναι τό Μυστήριο, διά τοῦ ὅποιον δημιουργεῖται, εὐλογεῖται καὶ ὀγιάζεται ἡ οἰκογένεια. Κατ' οἰκονομία, τό Μυστήριο ἐπαναλαμβάνεται μέχρι τρεῖς φορές.

7. Εὐχέλαιο: Τό Ἅγιον Εὐχέλαιο είναι τό Μυστήριο πού παρέχει τή σωματική καὶ ψυχική θαση στά ἀσθενοῦντα μέλη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Στήν Ὁρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία μποροῦμε νά τό τελέσουμε ὅποτε θέλουμε. Δέν ὑπάρχει κανένας περιορισμός ως πρός τό χρόνο τῆς τέλεσης τοῦ μυστηρίου.

Στήν Ὁρθόδοξη θεολογία καὶ ζωή, τά Μυστήρια ἀποτελοῦν τίς πύλες διά τῶν ὅποιων ὁ ἀνθρωπος ἐρχεται σέ ἐπικοινωνία καὶ κοινωνία μέ τό Θεόν.

Στό παρόν κείμενο θά ἀναφερθοῦμε στό ιερό Μυστήριο

τῆς Βάπτισης. Τό ρήμα «βαπτίζω» σημαίνει βυθίζω στό νερό. Άρχη καί κέντρο δύο τῶν μυστηρίων τῆς Ἑκκλησίας μας, εἶναι τό Ἅγιο Βάπτισμα, διότι μ' αὐτό ό ἄνθρωπος γίνεται χριστιανός, μέλος τῆς Ἑκκλησίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Συστατική γενέθλια πράξη τοῦ Βαπτισμάτος εἶναι ή Βάπτιση τοῦ Κυρίου ἀπό τὸν Ἰωάννη τὸν Πρόδρομο στὸν Ἰορδάνη ποταμό. Ὁ Ἰδιος ὁ Χριστός, πρὶν ἀπό τὴν Ἀνάληψη Του, παρήγγειλε στοὺς μαθητές Του λέγοντάς τους: «Πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη βαπτίζοντες αὐτούς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρός καί τοῦ Υἱοῦ καί τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος» (Ματθ. 28,19). Τό Βάπτισμα, λοιπόν, εἶναι θεμελιωμένο στή ζωή καί τή διδασκαλία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καί γ' αὐτό ἀποτέλεσε ἀπό τὰ πρῶτα χριστιανικά χρόνια τό Μυστήριο, μέ τό ὅποιο ό ἄνθρωπος λαμβάνει τή χάρη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀναγεννέται καί γίνεται κοινωνός τῆς νέας ζωῆς πού ἐγκαινίασε ὁ Χριστός μέ τή Σάρκωση τή Βάπτιση τή Σταύρωση καί τὴν Ἀνάσταση Του.

Ὁ Ἰδιος ὁ Χριστός μᾶς διδάσκει: «ἔάν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἔξ ὕδατος καί Πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν Βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ» (Ιωάν. γ' 5). Σπήν κολυμβήθρα, λοιπόν, γεννιέται ὁ νέος ἄνθρωπος. Μέ τό Βάπτισμα ό βαπτιζόμενος ἀπαλλάσσεται ἀπό τό προπατορικό ὅμάρτημα καί δέχεται ώς θεία δωρεά τή ζωή καί τό φῶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, πρᾶγμα πού τὸν καθιστᾶ ὑπεύθυνο φύλακα καί ἐργάτη τῶν ἐντολῶν Του. Ἐτοι τό Βάπτισμα δέν εἶναι μία πράξη μαγική ἀλλά μία δυνατότητα πού, γιά νά καρποφορήσει, ἀπαιτεῖ τὸν προσωπικό διγῶνα. Ἐπειδή δύμας, τό νήπιο δέν ἔχει ἐπίγνωση τῆς σημασίας τοῦ Μυστηρίου, ἐναπόκειται στοὺς γονεῖς καί στὸν ἀνάδοχο νά καθοδηγήσουν τὸν βαπτιζόμενο στό δρόμο τοῦ Χριστοῦ μέ τίς συμβουλές καί τίς παρανέσεις τους, προπάντων δύμας μέ τό παράδειγμά τους. Γιά τοῦτο τὸν λόγο ό ρόλος τοῦ ἀναδόχου εἶναι σημαντικός. Ο νονός, ώς ἐκπρόσωπος τοῦ βρέφους, δεσμεύεται νά διδάξει σέ αὐτό τίς ἀρχές τῆς Ὁρθόδοξης Χριστιανικής ὁμολογίας, γιά τοῦτο ἐπιβάλλεται νά εἶναι ὄρθοδοξος.

Τό ὄνομα πού δίνουμε στό παιδί κατά τὴν ὅγδοη ἡμέρα, εἶναι σημαντικό διότι εἶναι δηλωτικό τῆς προσωπικότητάς μας καί τῆς χριστιανικῆς μας ταυτότητας. Σημαίνει ἀκόμη ὅτι ἡ Ἑκκλησία μᾶς ἐντάσσει στὴν κοινωνία τῶν ἀγίων, τῶν ὅποιών δ κάθε ἔνας ἀπό ἡμᾶς φέρει καί ἔνα δομόμα τους, καί θέτει σάν στόχο καί ὄραμα τή μεταμόρφωση τῆς ζωῆς μας καί τὴν προοπτική γιά τὴν οὐράνια βασιλεία τοῦ Τριαδικοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐτοι κάθε φορά πού γιορτάζουμε τά ὄνομαστηρία μας ἀνανεώνουμε συγχρόνως καί αὐτὴν τὴν ἐλπίδα.

Ἐτοι, τό Μυστήριο τοῦ βαπτισμάτος εἰσάγει τὸν ἄνθρωπο στὴν Ἑκκλησία καί τὸν ἀναγεννᾶ πνευματικά. Εἶναι μία ὑποχρεωτική πράξη γιά ὅποιον ἐπιθυμεῖ νά γίνει χριστιανός, ἡ ὅποια πραγματοποιεῖται μέ τριπλή κατάδυση σέ νερό, στὸ ὄνομα τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδας καί δι' αὐτοῦ, ό

ἄνθρωπος καθαρίζεται ἀπό κάθε ἀμαρτία. Τό Μυστήριο τοῦτο τελεῖται μόνο μία φορά στή ζωή τοῦ κάθε ἀνθρώπου, δηλ. δέν ἐπαναλαμβάνεται. Πρὶν τὸν δον αἰῶνα ἡ βάπτιση γινόταν σέ μεγάλη ἡλικία τὴν ὥρα τῆς Θείας Λειτουργίας, ἀλλά ἐπεκράτησε σήμερα νά γίνεται στὴν παιδική ἡλικία διότι πολλά παιδιά πέθαιναν ἀβάπτιστα.

Τό ἀγιασμένο λάδι πού χρησιμοποιεῖται θεραπεύει τά τραύματα τῆς ἀμαρτίας, καί θωρακίζει τά σώματα τῶν ἀθλητῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Τό νερό εἶναι σύμβολο τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ λόγω τῆς φυσικῆς του ἰδιότητας νά καθαρίζει, σύμβολο τῆς ζωῆς, γιατί χωρίς αὐτό ζωή δέν ὑπάρχει, καί σύμβολο τοῦ θανάτου, ἐπειδή πνίγει, σκοτώνει καί ἐκμηδενίζει.

Τό Βάπτισμα, μέ τή δύναμη τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, γίνεται πνευματικό καί ἄγιο, ίκανον νά ὁγιάζει κάθε ἄνθρωπο. Ἐτοι μέ τίς τρεῖς καταδύσεις συνθάπτεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος μέ τόν Χριστό. Με τίς τρεῖς ἀναβάσεις συνανασταίνεται μαζί του. Οι περιφορά τοῦ ἰερέως, τοῦ ἀναδόχου καί τοῦ βαπτισθέντος γύρω ἀπό τὴν κολυμβήθρα εἶναι ἐκφραση χαρᾶς καί καλωσόρισμα τοῦ νέου μέλους ἀπό τὴν Ἑκκλησία.

Τά βαπτιστικά ἐνδύματα πρέπει νά ἔχουν λευκό χρῶμα. Τό λευκό χρῶμα συμβολίζει πή λαμπρότητα τῆς ψυχῆς. Στό λευκό χρῶμα ἡ Ἑκκλησία βλέπει τή λευκή στολή τῶν ἀγίων καί τῶν μαρτύρων στὸν παράδεισο, τά λευκά ἐνδύματα τῶν ὅγγελων στὴν ἀνάσταση καί στὴν ἀνάληψη τά ἱμάτια τοῦ μεταμορφωμένου Χριστοῦ, τό διόποιο ντύνεται ὁ νεοφύτος. Ἡ λαμπάδα εἶναι τό σύμβολο τοῦ φωτισμοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, μαρτυρία τῆς αἴγλης καί τῆς δόξας πού δεχόμαστε ἀπό τό Θεό. Εἶναι ἡ λαμπάδα τῆς πιστῆς μέ τὴν διοπία θά συναντήσουμε τό νυμφίο Χριστού. Τό κούρεμα τῶν μαλλιῶν γίνεται σάν προσφορά ἀπό τόν βαπτιζόμενο στόν Θεό. Εἶναι τρόπος εὐχαριστίας στόν Θεό πού ἐπλασε τόν ἄνθρωπο.

Μαζί μέ τό Μυστήριο τῆς Βάπτισης τελεῖται καί τό Μυστήριο τοῦ Χρίσματος. Μέ τὴν συνεχόμενη μυστηριακή καί μάρτυριακή ζωή καί τὴν τήρηση τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ μπορεῖ ὁ νεοφύτος νά ζει «ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς» καί νά ἀνανεώνει τίς δυνάμεις πού πήρε ἀπό τό βαπτισμά. Στό τέλος τοῦ Μυστηρίου, ό νέος ὄρθοδοξος Χριστιανός ἀξιώνεται γιά πρώτη φορά νά μεταλάβει τῶν ἀχράντων μυστηρίων.

Πηγές:

- ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ ΕΚΔΟΣΗ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΣΥΝΟΔΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ
- ΕΠΙΤΟΜΟΣ ΔΟΓΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΥ ΑΝΑΤΟΛΙΚΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ Α. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ ΕΚΔΟΣΙΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ 1955
- ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΗΘΙΚΗ ΙΙ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ Ι. ΜΑΝΤΖΑΡΙΔΗ

ΕΤΑΦΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΣΕΒΑΣΜΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ Κ. ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ

ΜΑΪΟΣ

- Το πρωί, τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό Αγίου Γεωργίου του Μεγαλομάρτυρος στην ομώνυμη Ελληνική Ορθόδοξη Κοινότητα Kingston-upon-Thames, όπου και παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα.
- Το πρωί τον επισκέφθηκε ο Λαυρέντιος Λαυρεντιάδης. Το βράδυ προήδρευσε συνεδρίας για την ίδρυση Ημερούσιου Ορθόδοξου Ομολογιακού Σχολείου Μέστης Εκπαίδευσης στο Βόρειο Λονδίνο.
- Τέλεσε την Νεκρώσιμη Ακολούθια για την Μαρία Πέτρου Γιάννουλου, στον Ιερό Ναό Αγίου Ιωάννη του Θεολόγου. Hackney Ανατολικού Λονδίνου.
- Το πρωί ανεχώρησε για την Κωνσταντινούπολη. Ακολούθως είχε ιδιάιτερη συνομιλία με την Α.θ. Παναγιόπη τον Οικουμενικό Πατριάρχη κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίο, το δε βράδυ παρεκάθησε σε Δείπνο με τα λοιπά Μέλη της Ιεράς Συνόδου του Πατριαρχείου.
- Καθ' όλη την διάρκεια της πρέμας μετέσχε των Συνεδριάσεων της Ιεράς Συνόδου. Το βράδυ παρεκάθησε σε Δείπνο σε εστιατόριο της Πόλης.
- Το πρωί επισκέφθηκε διάφορα Γραφεία του Πατριαρχείου και στη συνέχεια μετέσχε των Συνεδριάσεων της Ιεράς Συνόδου.
- Επέστρεψε στο Λονδίνο το πρωί. Το βράδυ παρέστη στην Ετήσια Κοινωνική Εκδήλωση της Hellenic Bankers' Society στο ξενοδοχείο Claridges.
- Το πρωί τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον εορτάζοντα Ιερό Ναό του Αγίου Ιωάννη. Hackney, όπου και παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα. Το απόγευμα τον επισκέφθηκε η Melissa Birol.
- Μετέβη στην πόλη Nottingham όπου προήδρευσε του Συνεδρίου του Ιερού Κλήρου της Αρχιεπισκοπής, αφού προηγουμένως παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα με τους Συνέδρους, που παρέθεσε στην Τοπική Κοινότητα Παναγίας της Ελεούσης. Η εναρκτήρια ομιλία του είχε θέμα «Η Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Θυατείρων και Μ. Βρετανίας - Προβλήματα και Προοπτικές του Παρόντος και του Μέλλοντος». Η συνεδρία συνεχίστηκε και το απόγευμα, παρέστη δε στη συνέχεια στον Εσπερινό στον Ιερό Ναό της Κοινότητος και το βράδυ παρεκάθησε σε Δείπνο με όλους τους Συνέδρους σε ξενοδοχείο της πόλης Nottingham.
- Το πρωί τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό των Αγίων Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου στην πόλη Mansfield και στη συνέχεια προήδρευσε τη τρίτη συνεδρίασης στους χώρους του εν λόγω Ναού. Μετά το Γεύμα, επισκέφθηκε μαζί με τους Συνέδρους το Newstead Abbey, την γενέτειρα του Λόρδου Βύρωνας, όπου και τέλεσε Τριάδιγμα για τον φιλέλληνα αυτόν. Επιστρέψας στο Mansfield, παρέστη στον Εσπερινό που έγινε στον Ιερό Ναό της Κοινότητος, παρεκάθησε δε στη συνέχεια σε Δείπνο και ακολούθως επέστρεψε στην πόλη Nottingham.
- Το πρωί παρέστη στην Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό Παναγίας της Ελεούσης, Nottingham, και στη συνέχεια προήδρευσε της τέταρτης συνεδρίασεως. Μετά επέστρεψε στο Λονδίνο.
- Το πρωί τέλεσε Τριάδιγμα στο Παρεκκλήσι της Αρχιεπισκοπής για αποβίσαντα μέλη της οικογενείας Σπύρου Μεταξά. Στη συνέχεια τον επισκέφθηκε διαδοχικά ο Σάρβας Χαραλάμπους, ο Annie Berchi, ο Πρέσβυτος της Λατβίας Eduards Stiprais, και ο Γεωργίος Αργύρης.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά ο Κύπρος Νίκολας (με τον οποίο παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα), ο Ανδρέας Αυγουστής και ο Ιερομόναχος Patrick Ramsey.
- Το βράδυ παρέστη στην Ετήσια Κοινωνική Εκδήλωση της Κοινότητος των Αγίων Δώδεκα Αποστόλων. Hatfield.
- Το πρωί, τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό των Αγίων Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου, Mansfield, στη διάρκεια της οποίας απένειψε το εκκλησιαστικό οφίκιο του Πρωτοπρεσβύτερου στον Οικονόμο π. Φωκά Χατζηοιζήν. Στη συνέχεια παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα που παρέθεσε στην Τοπική Κοινότητα.
- Προσκληθείς παρέστη στην εορταστική εκδήλωση που οργάνωσε σε κεντρικό ξενοδοχείο του Λονδίνου η Πρεσβεία του Ισραήλ με την ευκαιρία της 63ης επετείου από την ανακορύζεως της χώρας της ω Ανεξάρτητο Κράτος. Το βράδυ παρέστη στην εορταστική εκδήλωση για τα 90χρονα του Μιχάλη Χριστοδούλη, στο οίκημα της Κυπριακής Αδελφότητος Λονδίνου.

- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά ο Φίλιος Γραμμενόπουλος, και ο Καθηγητής Richard Clegg συνοδευόμενος από τον Δρα Χαράλαμπο Δενδρίνο (με τους οποίους παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα). Το βράδυ παρέστη στην τελετή ανάληψης των Δημαρχειακών Καθηκόντων της Λίζας Rutter ως Δημάρχου Barnet και στη συνέχεια στην Δεξίωση. Αργότερα προήδρευσε συνεδρίας του Εκκλησιαστικού Συμβουλίου της Κοινότητος Αγίου Δημητρίου, Edmonton Βορείου Λονδίνου.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά η Ιουλία Οικιάδου, η Παναγιώτα Σουλέλη, Χαρούλα Γεωργοπούλου και Ελεάνα Γρηγορίου, ο ζεύγος Gregory και Χριστιάνας Wellington, ο Διονύσιος Πανταζής και ο Μητροπολίτης Διοκλείας Καλλίστος. Το βράδυ παρέστη στον Αγγλικανικό Εσπερινό και την Οικουμενική Δεξίωση που οργάνωσε το Nikaeon Club στο Παλάτιο του Λάμπεθ.
- Μετέβη στην πόλη του Southampton όπου τέλεσε την Νεκρώσιμη Ακολούθια για την Μαρίνα Γρηγόρη Χατζηκυριάκου στον εκεί Ορθόδοξο Ναό του Αγίου Νικολάου, όπως και τον ενταφιασμό της στο κοιμητήριο της πόλης, όπου και ανέγνωσε Τρισάγιο για τους ενταφιασθέντες εκεί Ορθόδοξους Χριστιανούς.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά η Ευθυμία Τρίχα, ο Κώστας Χριστοφίδης, η Αφροδίτη Παύλου, ο Ιωάννης Κυριακίδης, και οι Ανδρέας Ιωάννην, Γεώργιος Καλλίτης και Αντώνης Θεοδώρου. Στη συνέχεια επισκέφθηκε ασθενή στο Νοσοκομείο St. Mary's, Paddington.
- Το βράδυ προσκληθείς παρεκάθησε στην Κοινωνική Εκδήλωση που οργάνωσε η Βοηθητική Αδελφότητα Κυριών της Κοινότητος Τίμιου Σταυρού και Αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ, Golders Green Λονδίνου, στην Αίθουσα Δεξιώσεων της Κοινότητος.
- Τέλεσε στην Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό Μεταμορφώσεως του Κυρίου στην πόλη Coventry, όπου και παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα και στη συνέχεια προήδρευσε συνεδρίας της Εκκλησιαστικής Επιτροπής και των Κηδεμόνων της Κοινότητος. Επιστρέψας στο Λονδίνο, προσκληθείς παρεκάθησε σε Δείπνο που οργάνωσαν ο Πρέσβυτος της Ρωσίας και ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Sourozh Ελισσάσιος με την ευκαρία της Ημέρας Σλαβικών Γραπτών Έργων και Πολιτισμού.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά η Anna Stacy-Alman, (δύο Μέλη του Εκκλησιαστικού Συμβουλίου της Κοινότητος Αγίας Τριάδος, Brighton) συνοδεύομένα από τον Αρχιμανδρίτη Γερμανό Κουρκούνη, το ζεύγος Michael και Tanya Turner, και η Πολυζένη Νικολάου.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά οι Σάββας και Στέλιος Βιολάρη, και ο Ιωάννης Κούβαρος.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά η Ιωάννης Πολυκανδριώτης, η Ιουλία Ερωτοκρήτου και Ειρήνη και Κατερίνα Κυπιτσίου, και οι Χάρης και Μαίρη Σοφοκλεΐδην (με τους οποίους και παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα σε εστιατόριο στο Mayfair Λονδίνου).
- Το πρωί παρέστη και μίλησε στο Inter-Faith Conference με θέμα «Εξετάζοντας τον Ρόλο Πίστεως στην Δημόσια Ζωή» που οργάνωσε η Κίνηση Θρησκείες για Ειρήνη (Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου) στο St. Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Bishopsgate Λονδίνου. Το απόγευμα ανεχώρησε αεροπορικώς για την Πράγα, όπου τον υποδέχθηκε στην αεροδρόμιο της πόλης ο Μακαριώτατος Μητροπολίτης Christofer.
- Επισκέφθηκε διάφορα αξιοθέατα της Πράγας.
- Το πρωί συνελεύτευρησε ως εκπρόσωπος του Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχη στην Θεία Λειτουργία στον Καθεδρικό Ναό Αγίων Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου Πράγας με την ευκαρία συμπλήρωσης πενταετίας από την εκλογή του Αρχιεπίσκοπου Christofer ως Μητροπολίτη Τσεχίας και Σλοβακίας. Συνελεύτευρησε επίσης, εκπρόσωποι των Πατριαρχείων Μόσχας, Ρουμανίας, Βουλγαρίας και Γεωργίας, και των Εκκλησιών Ελλάδος και Πολωνίας. Επέστρεψε στο Λονδίνο το απόγευμα.
- Το πρωί τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό Παναγίας Χρυσελεούσης και Αγίας Μαρίνης, Stoke-on-Trent, όπου και παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα. Το απόγευμα ευλόγησε τους γάμους του Κωνσταντίου Δ. Μάρκου και της Jade Ella Mason, στον Ιερό Καθεδρικό Ναό Κοιμήσεως της Θεοτόκου και Απ. Ανδρέα, Birmingham, παρεκάθησε δε και στο Γαμήλιο Δείπνο.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά ο Παντελής Αγιώπης και ο Μάρκος Elgohary.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά ο Πρέσβυτος της Ελλάδος στο Λονδίνο,

Αριστείδης Σάνδης, ο Δημήτριος Σαλοπάτας, ο Γεώργιος Ορφανός συνοδεύμενος από την θυγατέρα του, Γεωργία (με τους οποίους παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα), και ο Δρ. Iskra Koceva.

ΙΟΥΝΙΟΣ

- Το πρώιμη επισκέφθηκε τον Ελληνικό Ραδιοσταθμό Λονδίνου (L.G.R.). Το μεσημέρι παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα με τον κ. Παπατόλια. Το απόγευμα τον επισκέφθηκαν ο Ιωάννης Παρέας και ο Κωνσταντίνος Κάλαθος.
- Τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Καθεδρικό Ναό Αγίας Σοφίας Λονδίνου. Το απόγευμα έδωσε συνέντευξη στην Nina Dos Santos του C.N.N. (News), και στη συνέχεια τον επισκέφθηκε ο Aleksandr Nekrashev (συνοδεύμενος από τον Zonas Bicheno).
- Ανεχώρησε αεροπορικώς για την Τουρκία με ορμά προσκυνητών προς επίσκεψη εκκλησιών αναφερομένων στο Βιβλίο της Αποκαλύψεως. Πρώτος σταθμός ο Κωνσταντινούπολη, στη συνέχεια η Σύρου και ακολούθως η Λαοδίκεια (Denizli), όπου και διανυκτέρευσαν.
- Το πρώιμη επισκέφθηκαν τα ερείπια της Λαοδίκειας και της Ιεράπολης (Pamukkale), όπου είδαν τις θερμές πηγές και το Μαρτύριο του Αγίου Φιλίππου, διανυκτέρευσαν δε και πάλι στο Danizli.
- Το πρώιμη τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό της Αγίας Φωτεινής στην Σμύρνη, επισκέφθηκαν δε στη συνέχεια διάφορα αξιοθέατα της άλοτς ακμάζουσας αυτής Ελληνικής μεγαλούπολης. Ακολούθως μετέβησαν στα Θυάτειρα (Akhisar), όπου τον επισκέφθηκαν τα ερείπια της αρχαίας βασιλικής στο κέντρο της πόλης, προσευχήθηκε δε για τους πιστούς της Αρχιεπισκοπής, όπου και διανυκτέρευσαν.
- Το πρώιμη επισκέφθηκαν την Πέργαμο (Bergama), όπου είδαν τους περιφρόμους κλασικούς ναούς και την «Κόκκινη Βασιλική», και τις Σάρδεις (Sart Koy), με τα κλασικά, τα Ιουδαϊκά και τα Χριστιανικά αξιοθέατα, επέστρεψαν δε πάλιν στα Θυάτειρα, όπου και διανυκτέρευσαν.
- Το πρώιμη επισκέφθηκαν την Φιλαδέλφεια και ακολούθως επέστρεψε στην Σμύρνη και από εκεί στην Κωνσταντινούπολη, στο Πατριαρχείο.
- Το πρώιμη μετέσχε των συνεδριάσεων της Ιεράς Συνόδου. Το βράδυ επισκέφθηκε την έκθεση «Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι της Κωνσταντινούπολης» που έγινε στο Μουσείο του Τορκαρί.
- Το πρώιμη μετέσχε των συνεδριάσεων της Ιεράς Συνόδου. Το βράδυ, παρέστη στον Μεγάλο Εσπερινό στον Πατριαρχικό Ναό του Αγίου Γεωργίου, με την ευκαιρία της επικείμενης εορτής των Αγίων Βαρνάβα και Βαρθολομαίου.
- Το πρώιμη παρέστη στην Θεία Λειτουργία στον Πατριαρχικό Ναό του Αγίου Γεωργίου, προεξάρχοντος του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχού κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίου, ο οποίος εόρταζε. Στη συνέχεια παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα που παρέθεσε ο εορτάζων Πατριάρχης σε εστιατόριο της Πόλης. Το βράδυ επέστρεψε αεροπορικώς στο Λονδίνο.
- Το βράδυ παρεκάθησε σε Δείπνο που παρέθεσε ο Κοινότητα Τιμίου Σταυρού και Αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ, Golders Green Λονδίνου.
- Το πρώιμη, τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία και στη συνέχεια τον Εσπερινό της Γονυκλισίας στον Καθεδρικό Ναό Αγίας Σοφίας Λονδίνου.
- Το πρώιμη, τέλεσε και πάλιν την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Καθεδρικό Ναό Αγίας Σοφίας Λονδίνου. Το απόγευμα τον επισκέφθηκε ο Γενικός Διευθυντής του Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών Κύπρου, Νικόλαος Αιμιλίου, συνοδεύμενος από τον Ύπατο Αρμοστή της Κύπρου στο Λονδίνο. Αλέξανδρο Ζήνωνα, τον Αναπληρωτή Ύπατο Αρμοστή, Γεώργιο Χριστοφή, και τον Γενικό Πρόδειγο της Κύπρου, Γεώργιο Γεωργίου.
- Καθ' όλη την πέμπρα, μετέσχε των Ατυπικών Συνομιλιών μεταξύ του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου και της Αγγλικής Κοινωνίας στο Παλάτιο του Λάμπεθ. Επιστρέψας στην Αρχιεπισκοπή, τον επισκέφθηκε ο Γεώργιος Τρίτος.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά το ζεύγος Χαραλάμπους και Μιχαέλας Γεωργίου, και ο Αρχιμανδρίτης Χριστόδουλος Περσόπουλος.
- Τον επισκέφθηκαν διαδοχικά ο Αρχιεπίκοπος Κομάνων Γερμινίη, συνοδεύμενος από τους Πρωθιερείς John Marks και Αλέξανδρο Φωστηρόπουλο, (με τους οποίους παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα), τα δε απόγευμα το Καρο Κεχεγιαν, και το ζεύγος Αργύρη και Νέδης Χατζηβασιλείου.
- Το πρώιμη προήδρευσε συνεδρίας της Εκπαιδευτικής Επιτροπής του Pan-Orthodox Assembly, με τους οποίους και παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα. Το βράδυ τον επισκέφθηκε ο Κωνσταντίνος Παπόγλου, τελεσε δε Τρισάγιο στο Παρεκκλήσιο της Αρχιεπισκοπής για την

Γάλατεια Καλογήρου.

- Το πρώιμη, τον επισκέφθηκε ο Κωνσταντίνος Σεβέρης. Το βράδυ, τέλεσε Μέγαν Εσπερινό στον Ιερό Ναό των Αγίων Αντωνίου και Ιωάννου Βαπτιστή, Holloway, όποτε και απένειμε το εκκλησιαστικό οφρίκιο του Οικονόμου στον π. Θωμά Αρτέμη. Απένειμε επίσης Διπλώματα στους σπουδαστές εικονογραφίας της Σχολής Αράκνης και Αγίου Αντωνίου. Αργότερα τέλεσε τα εγκαίνια Έκθεσης Φωτογραφιών στο «Κοινοτικό Κέντρο» στο Palmers Green Βορείου Λονδίνου για το τουρκοκρατούμενο χωρίο Ακανθού Κύπρου. Το δε βράδυ παρέστη στην Κοινωνική Εκδήλωση του Ελληνικού Ιατρικού Συνδέσμου, στο Ελληνικό Κέντρο Λονδίνου.
- Το πρώιμη, τέλεσε την Θεία Λειτουργία στον Ιερό Ναό Αγίου Νικολάου, Southampton, και την Επιμνημόσυνη Δέσποιν για το 40ήμερο από την θανάτου της Μαρίκα Γρηγόρη Χατζηκυριάκου (ανεψιού του Αρχιεπισκόπου), επισκέφθηκε δε στη συνέχεια το Κομπιπάρι, όπου ανέψευψε προσευχές στον τάφο της. Ακολούθως παρεκάθησε σε Γεύμα σε εστιατόριο της πόλης.
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ENCYCLICAL FROM ARCHBISHOP GREGORIOS TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SACRED ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA AND GREAT BRITAIN ON THE OCCASION OF THE JOYFUL PERIOD OF THE DORMITION FAST

Dearly Beloved in the Lord.

"In distress I have you as my haven, and in sorrows you are my joy and gladness; and in all illness, you have been my quick help, and rescuer in perils, and in all temptations my guardian and protectress".

During the month of August, according to our tradition, the Orthodox Church every evening sings the solemn Supplicatory Canons to the Most-holy Mother of our God. And so again this year we shall be chanting those wonderful and inspired songs which were composed by enlightened hymnographers many centuries ago, and which countless Orthodox Christians have ever since sung time and again in honour of Christ's Mother, thus proclaiming the holy teachings of the Church and its faith in her. These services are held during the first days of August as a sacred offering of the Faithful to Christ's Most-holy Mother, who took in her loving arms the Saviour of the human race, Christ the God-man. The hymns were written and are chanted during the first fifteen days of August leading to the celebration of the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, her departure from this world and ascent into heaven to remain forever with her only son Jesus Christ. Just as every person who comes into the world dies and 'returns to the earth whence he came', so too the Mother of God experienced the sting of death, and this is precisely what we celebrate as a landmark in the history of the life of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which Christ is the Head. Christ Himself experienced the sting of death in order to fulfil His universal mission for the salvation of the human race and to restore us to Paradise.

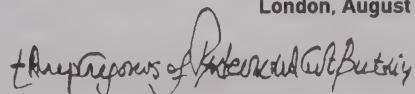
It is no coincidence that we Orthodox Christians, who are Christians of the Resurrection, should celebrate with splendour and gladness the Dormition of the Mother of God. We consider this feast a 'Summer Pascha'. It is also no coincidence that Orthodox Christians for fourteen days sing every evening in church and at home the Small and Great Supplicatory Canons to the Mother of God; and together with the authors of those hymns, we say: 'The passions torment with their assaults, despondency's burden presses heavily on my soul, with the calm of your Son and God, pure Maiden, O All-immaculate Virgin, now give me peace'.

The 'praying Church', the 'Church militant', can not be moved in the face of pain and death, before the many trials and adversities of life – illness, war, captivity, and all those sorrows which afflict society on a daily basis. The hymns of the Supplicatory Canons are full of humanity, they offer comfort and encouragement to those who are afflicted and anxious for the many concerns of human life. They engender in our hearts a blessed hope and the spirit of peace, the sense of God's kindness which should govern our private and public lives. The word 'supplication' holds a sense of the spiritual, heavenly and angelic world, reminding us of our mystical relationship with God, of the love and light which is enriched by the joy and communion of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit alleviates our pain, rekindles lost hopes, drives out the fear of death, and raises the soul to heaven; it disperses hatred and the sinful passions which nest within us. As St Paul says, 'The Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans' (Rom. 8:26) for our solace, our spiritual peace, and our salvation.

Let us therefore flock to our churches to conjoin our prayers with those of the Mother of God and all the Faithful of the world. Let us kneel devoutly before the icon of the Virgin Mary and ask for her intercessions for our families, our friends and our enemies, for the rulers of Greece, Cyprus, Great Britain, and all the world, in whose hands lies the progress of their peoples. Let us not forget that faith in God and prayer are weapons of victory in our struggle for peace and the good of all the world. Let us entrust ourselves again to the providence of God glorified in Trinity, and let us radiantly celebrate the Dormition of the Mother of God, singing with the hymnist: 'Mother of the One who redeemed us all, hear the supplications your unworthy household makes, be our intercessor with him, the One born from you, the world's true Sovereign Lady, become our Advocate'.

At the intercessions, Lord, of your Most-holy Mother, have mercy and save your world, for you are good and merciful, and you love mankind. Amen.

London, August 2011



Gregorios, Archbishop of
Thyateira & Great Britain.

THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PAN-ORTHODOX ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS WITH CHURCHES IN THE BRITISH ISLES

The Third Meeting of the Pan-Orthodox Assembly of Bishops with Churches in the British Isles was held on 30th June at the Church of the Twelve Apostles, Hatfield, Hertfordshire. Before the meeting, the bishops concelebrated at the Divine Liturgy on the occasion of the host Community's Feast Day.

The following bishops were present:

- His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira & Great Britain (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople)
- His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh (Patriarchate of Moscow)
- The Most Revd Archbishop Iossif of Western & Southern Europe (Patriarchate of Romania)
- The Most Revd Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany & Great Britain (Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia)
- The Most Revd Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch (Diocese of Sourozh)
- The Rt Revd Bishop Athanasios of Tropaeou (Archdiocese of Thyateira)

The Most Revd Metropolitan John of Western and Central Europe (Patriarchate of Antioch) The Rt Revd Bishop Dositej of Great Britain & Scandinavia (Patriarchate of Serbia), the Rt Revd Bishop Zenon of Dmanisi and Great Britain (Patriarchate of Georgia), the Most Revd Metropolitan Simeon of Central and Western Europe (Patriarchate of Bulgaria) the Rt Revd Bishop Ioan of Parnassos (Ecumenical Patriarchate's Ukrainian Orthodox Diocese in Great Britain) The Most Revd Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia (Archdiocese of Thyateira) and the Rt Revd Bishop Chrysostomos of Kyanea (Archdiocese of Thyateira) were unable to attend.

Also present at the Meeting were:

- The Revd Protopresbyter Samir Gholam (representing Metropolitan John of Western and Central Europe)
- The Revd Dragan Lazic (representing Bishop Dositej of Great Britain)

and Scandinavia)

- The Very Revd Archimandrite Vassilos Papavassiliou (Secretary)

The Meeting of the Bishops took place following a festal meal provided by the host Community.

The Bishops discussed:

- a) The various practices amongst the dioceses regarding preparation for Communion and the rules regarding mixed marriages, and the possibility of an agreed position on these matters.
- b) Catechetical materials and the training of clergy and catechists.
- c) Canonical issues regarding the transfer and visits of clergy from one diocese to another.
- d) The prospect of a Pan-Orthodox Conference.

The Episcopal Assembly decided that:

- 1) The Pastoral Committee of the Assembly (chaired by Archbishop Elisey) should prepare pastoral recommendations regarding a) the preparation of Holy Communion, b) mixed marriages, and c) the transfer of clergy from one diocese to another.
- 2) The Educational Committee of the Assembly (chaired by Archbishop Gregorios) should examine existing leaflets and pamphlets on the Orthodox Church, its Faith and Sacraments, for the consideration of the Episcopal Assembly.

The next Episcopal Meeting will be held on 24th November 2011 at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God and All Saints, London.

London, 1st July 2011

From the Secretariat of the
Pan-Orthodox Assembly of Bishops

SERMON BY ARCHBISHOP GREGORIOS

AT THE PAN-ORTHODOX LITURGY

Church of 12 Apostles, Hertfordshire, 30th June 2011

J

believe "in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church". At every Divine Liturgy we make this declaration of faith. Since today is the Feast Day of the Twelve Apostles, I would like to focus first on what it means to be the 'apostolic' Church. Above all, this means that the Orthodox Church has its roots in the Faith of the Apostles, who transmitted the message of our salvation in Christ, first uttered laconically by St Peter, that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God", to which our Lord replies: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter (the rock), and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it". (Matt. 16:16-18)

It is important that we remember our Lord's promise, that even the gates of Hell will not prevail against Christ's Church. Too many of us do not truly believe in such a Church. Nowhere is this more evident than in the schisms that exist within the Orthodox world. At the first sign of trouble or at the slightest disagreement, some Orthodox and many other Christians are willing to create their own factions. Such divisions and dissensions are nothing new. They have, unfortunately, been a feature of Christian life since the time of the Apostles, as anyone who reads the Epistles of St Paul will quickly discover. St Ignatius of Antioch, at the beginning of the 2nd century, writes: "Avoid divisions as the beginning of evils". (Epistle to the Smyrneans) "Love unity; flee divisions". (Epistle to the Philadelphians) St Basil, in his Liturgy, prays, "Put an end to schisms in the Churches". But in spite of all of these problems, the Church survives and flourishes, and will abide forever.

Secondly, to be the Apostolic Church means to be the Church of Jesus Christ. As our Lord said to the Twelve, "Whoever accepts you accepts me, and whoever accepts me accepts the Father who sent

me". (Matt.10: 40) We know too that the Apostles ordained bishops, priests and deacons to continue their work. These are the successors of the Apostles. They continue the work of the Apostles to this very day. The Church is Apostolic because of the apostolic succession of its bishops, and because of the never-changing apostolic preaching of the Incarnation, Cross, Death, Burial and glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But to be the Apostolic Church means something more. The Gospel Reading for today's Feast describes the sending out, the 'apostoli', of the Twelve Apostles to preach the Good News that is the coming of the Only-begotten Son and Word of God and His Kingdom. (Matt.10: 5-16) The Church is therefore something that is 'sent out' into the world. We Christians are not to remain behind closed doors, celebrating our own private customs and rituals. We are called to proclaim the good news that Christ has risen from the dead, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. Christ said this to His Apostles: "If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world". (John 15:19) If we Christians are to bear effective witness to Christ, we must remember that we are called to point beyond this world, to guide people to the Kingdom of Heaven. This means that the Church has a never-ending mission, which is not static but dynamic, and is continuously being made new in order to be understood and received by people of every age.

The Orthodox Church today is closer to the age of the Apostles than recent generations. We live in a society which is no longer shaped by the Church. Her influence on society has dwindled, and her teachings are not so well known. There is widespread ignorance about Christianity in society. Christianity is persistently on the defensive against secularism, atheism, agnosticism and humanitarianism, the proponents of which often claim that there is no need for religion, that people can live without God. What place, then,

is there for the Church in modern society? I think one of the greatest challenges we face is confronting the temptations of contemporary society and providing an effective witness in an ever-changing world.

We also proclaim that our Church is 'Catholic', which means on the one hand 'universal' or 'world-wide', and on the other, 'complete'. It is complete because it is the Body of Christ and the Holy Spirit fills it and guides it into all truth. As the hymnographer of Pentecost writes: "The Holy Spirit binds together and guides the Institution of the Church". It is universal because it is for all times, all places, and all people, regardless of language and culture. It is not just for Greeks, Arabs, Eastern Europeans, and the rest, but for everyone. The Orthodox Church is comprised of ethnic groups, but it is beyond ethnicity. It is universal - it embraces all people, irrespective of race, language, culture and national boundaries. In the Book of Revelation, St John writes: "You were slain and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation. You made them to be a Kingdom and priests serving our God, and they shall reign upon the earth". (Rev. 5: 9-10) Our Liturgy, our co-celebration as Bishops from various Orthodox Churches today, reveals the 'catholicity', the 'universality' of our Church. It is a great joy to concelebrate with brothers and bishops of other Orthodox traditions and jurisdictions. We are thus reminded that we united, that we make up the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are part of the same heavenly Kingdom, we share the same Faith, we are members of one body, and so we all share together in the Common Cup that is the Body and Blood of Christ.

This means that we must strive to work together to overcome our prejudices, our nationalism and our exclusiveness, in order that we may truly proclaim the letter and spirit of Orthodoxy in this hospitable country. This proclamation of faith we must make not only for the benefit of our own congregations, but for that of the wider society. But we must also remember that we live in a country that is by tradition Christian, and we should not be proponents of an aggressive proselytism. We should work together with the other Christians of this country, despite the fact we are not in Eucharistic Communion with them.

The Church is Holy. Not because of our own virtue, but because Christ is the head of the Church and we are members of His body, which has been made holy and is continually being made holy by divine adoption and by His Sacrifice on the Cross. As St Paul writes,

"Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify her, having purified her with the washing of water with a word, that he might present the Church to himself glorious, without spot or wrinkle or anything similar, but that she might be holy and unblemished". (Ephesians 5: 25-27)

And finally, the Church is one. There is only one Christ, and He has one body. The various Orthodox Churches, Greek, Russian, Serbian, Antiochian, Romanian, Georgian, Bulgarian, English, and the rest, are one Church. But all too often, this doctrine of the Church is not taken seriously enough by us Orthodox. We think of ourselves as a federation of churches rather than as the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We applaud Christian unity from a distance, not really wishing to know our brothers and sisters in Christ, not really wishing to have a closer relationship or co-operation with them. We tend to prefer division to unity, discord to harmony, and we would rather reduce our Church to a specific group of people, to a particular ethnicity, to people we feel more comfortable and familiar with. This is, I think, a great temptation, if not a sin, from which none of us are exempt. We Orthodox must free ourselves from our complexes and be more open, we must kindle true brotherhood and have dialogue with one another.

We are called to become what we are. We are called to be one. As our Lord said to the Father on behalf of the Apostles: "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one - as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me". (John 17: 21)

Let us note that very important point: "May they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me". We cannot be credible witnesses of Christianity if we are divided amongst ourselves, if we do not foster a deeper unity, brotherhood, and co-operation amongst ourselves, particularly those of us who live in these blessed lands.

The answer to the challenge to truly be 'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic' is humility and divine love. Only when we have humility and love between us will we find unity, holiness, concern for all people, and the power of the apostolic teaching which transformed the world forever. Let us therefore learn to love one another, "that with one mind we may confess: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Trinity Consubstantial and undivided". Amen.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Archimandrite Vassilios Papavassiliou

In the account of our Lord's Transfiguration, we can pinpoint three fundamental truths about the Christian Faith. The first is the harmony that exists between the Old and New Testaments. Christ stands before the two great prophets and witnesses of the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah. 'By the testimony of two or three witnesses must the matter be established' [Deut. 19:15]. I referred to Moses and Elijah as witnesses. Witnesses of what? Witnesses of God the Word, Jesus Christ. All manifestations of the deity in the Old Testament are not of God the Father, whom no one has seen but the Son (cf. John 1:18), but of the Word of God. It was He Whom Moses saw and spoke with on Mount Sinai. It was He with Whom Elijah conversed on Mount Horeb. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, is that same God and Word of the Old Testament, now conversing with the prophets on Mount Tabor, now made manifest in the flesh and living as a human being among us.

The second truth which the Transfiguration teaches us is that Christ's divinity and humanity are inseparable. The light with which Christ is transfigured is a light with which His flesh is transfigured. Having become man, He is not revealed sometimes as man and sometimes as God, but always as the two at once. He is no less human in the Transfiguration and no less divine in the Crucifixion. It is through the flesh of divinity that our salvation is made possible. This salvation means our own transfiguration. Christ was transfigured not only to show us what He is, but also to

show us what we will become. The Transfiguration of Christ points us to the glory of the Resurrection – a resurrection not only of the soul, but also of the body – and gives us a glimpse into that eternal and heavenly city which 'has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light and the Lamb is its lamp' [Rev. 21:23].

The third truth, which follows from the second, is that the human body is not an enemy or a prison of the soul, but an agent. There can be no such thing as spiritual life without the body. Treating spirituality and the material world as two separate things flies in the face of everything that Christ has done for us. Do we not eat His Flesh and drink His Blood at the Eucharist? When we think of spirituality, perhaps the last thing that comes to mind is the act of eating and drinking. But what can be more spiritual than this when we eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ? In other words, the Transfiguration teaches us that the body is sacred, and we must treat it as such. It is for this reason that, on the Feast Day of the Transfiguration, we offer the first fruits to God so that they may be blessed, and so that those who partake of them and offer them may attain joy and forgiveness. Just as these fruits grow and ripen under the rays of the summer sun, so may the spiritual fruits of faith and love increase and mature in us by the light of God's grace. By that same grace, may we all reach some degree of transfiguration in life, albeit a small and invisible transfiguration of the heart.

The Gospel According to Saint Matthew 17:1-9



A

t that time, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led him up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead."

The challenge of contemporary homosexual culture to the Orthodox Church.

By the Very Rev'd Protopresbyter Stephen J.F. Maxfield



ontemporary homosexual culture? How can we talk of such a thing? What do we mean? It is to these questions that we must turn at the beginning and then consider where the challenge to the Orthodox Church lies.

I am sufficiently old – the ‘wrong’ side of 60, to be able to remember quite well a time when, in Britain, men who committed homosexual acts were deemed to be criminals and were sent to prison. Homosexuality was considered to be a matter that was taboo and not discussed in society, certainly not polite society, even if one knew that it was something that existed – (unlike Queen Victoria, who, legend recounts, refused to sign the Act of Parliament that outlawed homosexual acts between women because she refused to believe that they could exist). Yet in less than fifty years we find ourselves in a situation where homosexuality is considered to be a normal “life choice”, where teachers may be severely censured if they do not teach it in this way, where sex therapists must teach men how to have sex together and where hotels must make rooms with double beds available to a couple of men.

It is a fact worth mentioning, that the word “homosexual” is relatively new. It was coined originally by a German psychiatrist at the very end of the 19th century to describe people who commit sexual acts with people of their own sex: *Homo* being the Greek for ‘same’. In England, the word only started to be used in general speech after the First World War by such authors as George Bernard Shaw and Stella Gibbons in her humorous work *Cold Comfort Farm*.¹ Before this time, those who committed homosexual acts were referred to as “paederasts”. This word again derives from Greek roots (*paídios*: a child or boy and *erastes*: lover). And indeed in those days no distinction whatever was drawn between men who committed sexual acts with boys, and those who committed sexual acts with other men. It was assumed that anybody who did it with the one would certainly do it with the other. Not so today. There is now a definite and clear distinction drawn between “homosexual” and the new word “paedophile”. (This is another word with Greek origins but confusing: *Philos* is not sexual, but brotherly love, quite a different thing altogether to what paedophile describes: the corruption and sexual abuse of children.) Contemporary homosexuals or “Gays” would be appalled at being generally

thought of as ‘Paedophiles’.

Again as an example of how things have changed, one needs to look back only forty years to a time when very few people who had homosexual inclinations would allow anybody other than their closest friends to know it. It was a secret; and they did not desire the consequences of being “outed” – exposed for their sexual tastes. Yet now, many homosexuals are quite open about these tastes and one is considered exceedingly old fashioned if one is not prepared to accept that one’s Member of Parliament, for instance, could be a homosexual.

However all this is not exclusive to homosexuality. We are living through a time that has been described as a “sexual revolution” and indeed in Western cultures this can hardly be denied for two fundamental reasons. The first is the availability of effective contraceptives which allow women to engage in sexual intercourse without any fear of becoming pregnant and the second is that in many countries, even if contraceptives are not available, abortion is freely available and women or couples may resort to safe abortionists to destroy their babies. Exactly as was predicted when these methods of birth control were under discussion, the result has been a culture of ‘safe’ promiscuity. The word ‘safe’ is in inverted commas because while the results may have been safe from a physical point of view, they may well have had mental and spiritual results that have been very dangerous indeed. For instance sexual activity may bring strong feelings of guilt, yet curiously this sense of guilt, of knowing one is doing wrong can bring about a rush of adrenalin that is itself fulfilling. Committing the sin brings the desire to repeat it!

But alongside this revolution there has been another one in Western cultures. Couples have become married at a later and later age thus prolonging the time that young, sexually active people spend before entering culturally acceptable relationships, be they marriage or cohabitation. It is worth remembering that in the middle ages girls were frequently married when they were twelve and in some countries, such as Wales, men were considered as having come of age when they were fourteen. In former times the delay between asexual childhood and sexual activity was very short indeed². The issue here is an idea that because you can have sexual relations, safely, therefore you

ought to have them. Indeed not to do so is in some way strange and unnatural. The idea that actually abstaining from sex is quite natural and normal and indeed does no one any harm is reviled and resisted by those who promote the sexual revolution.

The issue of “Orientation”.

During the 1950s and 1960s four scientific reports were published on human sexuality following research in the United States of America *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953)³, by Dr. Alfred Kinsey, Wardell Pomeroy and others and published by Saunders. *Human Sexual Response* (1960) and *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (1970), by William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson. These not only told us a great deal more about the sexual activities of men and women but they also presented them in a way that claimed to be scientific and therefore “true”. Subsequently the methodology of the experiments behind these reports has been challenged and much of the detail is now considered unsound but many of the broad ideas have been accepted by the general population, though there is not the same acceptance from the sociological, psychological and gynaecological disciplines from which they originated. One of the most important concepts that are now widely accepted is that of “Orientation”. The point here is that the sexuality of a given man or woman’s sexuality is conditioned by factors, often considered beyond their control, which determines them to a particular kind of sexual activity, heterosexual (meaning sexual activity with the opposite sex), homosexual or bisexual (meaning that the person will indulge in sexual activities with any sex, their own or the opposite). Exactly when this “orientation” will be determined depends on the authority. Some suggest that it is genetic, determined in the home or determined as a matter of choice or even as a result of abuse.

It is important to point out however that with the scientific community this concept of “orientation” is by no means fully understood, nor indeed accepted. It has been suggested for instance that “orientation” may change during a person’s life⁴. So, for instance, the American Psychological Association in their Encyclopaedia of Psychology state:-

“Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation – heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality – is determined by any particular factor or factors. The evaluation of amici is that, although some of this research may be promising in facilitating greater understanding of the development of sexual orientation, it does not permit a conclusion based in sound sci-

ence at the present time as to the cause or causes of sexual orientation, whether homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. (Vol 7, p 260)⁵ And further “Currently [as of “September 26, 2007”], there is no scientific consensus about the specific factors that cause an individual to become heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual — including possible biological, psychological, or social effects of the parents’ sexual orientation”.

This could be significant, as we shall see when we consider the response that the Orthodox Church makes to these issues and it is to this response that we must now turn.

At the outset we need to state some basic Orthodox teachings about humanity and sexuality.

First we must state that it is our understanding that humans were created by God, (according to our image and likeness.. *Genesis 1:26*), and are thus composite beings composed both of the physical and the spiritual. That their creation was good and that they were given the power to reproduce and thus assist in the creation of further human beings (*Increase and multiply... Genesis 1:28*) and that this power also was good. (*Genesis 1:26-31*⁶) Note however, that it is NOT Orthodox Christian teaching that every human being is individually created by God⁷, even if they are known to Him from their conception. (This latter teaching is important for our subject because a person may not say that his “orientation” is God given and may or should thus be indulged).

Second we understand that humans are created in two complimentary kinds, men and women and it is God’s intention that they should function normally as sexual beings who give increase and as guardians of the rest of His physical creation⁸.

Third we must state that as a result of the Fall, mankind is marred and sinful. All are sinful and all may commit all sins without exception. It is not Orthodox Christian teaching that there is elite of special people who are predestined to be different from the rest and thus will not sin as others. The sole exception to this rule is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who unites in His person both the perfect human and the perfect God and is without sin.

Finally we must state that the Orthodox Christian understanding of sexuality is quite simple. Sexual acts may take place between man and woman who are joined in the mystery or sacrament of marriage in which condition they are blessed not only with children but also with the comfort of each other. All other sexual acts come under the censure of fornication. BUT this is a very broad term indeed consisting of everything from the wet dream of a youth through to the activities of a professional prostitute. They are not all

considered in the same way, nor are they considered as having the same importance or significance. The driver for the issue here is to do with the reception of communion: under what circumstances is a person barred from communion and for how long, if at all?

From these principles we may draw certain conclusions. First of all, homosexual acts will be included under the general umbrella of fornication. And note that it is the **acts** that are the issue. A person may be tempted by all sorts of things but unless he commits them he does **not sin** and **should not** be condemned. A man may be inclined towards homosexual acts, just as another man is inclined towards over-indulgence in alcohol or anger, neither of them are sinners unless they commit the act. Theologically speaking the Church does not accept that a person is "a homosexual". And here there is a challenge for the Orthodox Church because the homosexual culture of today would very much like to re-define human beings not as men and women but with a qualifier: he is a "gay man" or she is a "straight woman". This fundamentally un-Christian labelling must be resisted.

However homosexual acts are not merely included with fornication. They are singled out for attention by the Church primarily based on teachings that we find in both the Old and the New Testaments. The first is the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (*Genesis 18:16-19:29*). This is of particular significance because the sin was deemed to be so extraordinary and unnatural that God (in the form of three angels) went to the city of Sodom to see for Himself whether the report was indeed true. And indeed, the people of Sodom left Him in no doubt for when the angels arrived at Sodom "*And the men of the city, the Sodomites, from young man to elder, all the people together, encircled the dwelling and they were summoning Lot and were saying to him. "Where are the men who came in to you tonight? Bring them out to us in order that we may have relations with them."*" (*Genesis 19:4-5*). The Law, as given in the book of Leviticus is clear. Sodomy is a sin.⁹ In the New Testament we find teaching on the subject by St Paul, particularly his first letter to the Corinthians "*You know perfectly well that people who do wrong will not inherit the kingdom of God: people of immoral lives, idolaters, adulterers, catamites, sodomites, thieves, usurers, drunkards, slanderers and swindlers...*" (*1 Corinthians 6:9¹⁰*) In St Paul's time Corinth was dominated by the Acropolis on which stood a huge temple to Aphrodite, housing, it is said up to 2,000 temple prostitutes. It is significant therefore that this teaching was written to the Corinthians for whom sexual licence must have been an ever present reality. However this sexual licence was not confined to Corinth

of course. Throughout the Roman Empire until the hegemony of the Orthodox Church homosexual lifestyles were almost the norm. The Emperors Hadrian was famous for his male lover as was the bizarre Emperor Elagabalus (218-222) who it is said had his lover proclaimed as the "Emperor's Husband". It should be remembered that Christian ethics were forged in marked distinction and opposition to the norms of the day.

We continue to find teaching against homosexual acts from the time of the New Testament on, for instance in the letter of St Barnabas chapter 10 (late 1st early 2nd century) "... *by which he means you are not to debauch young boys, or become like those who do...etc.*"¹¹ In fact many church fathers condemned homosexuality notably St John Chrysostom (late 4th century).

Not surprisingly it is in the Church Canons that the matter is most clearly dealt with. The issue principally is that of the sin of sodomy for which a penance of 15 years was imposed by St Basil Canons 7 and 62 (4th century). St Gregory of Nyssa (4th century) imposed a penance of 18 years. It would seem that these fathers derive their teaching from Canon 16 of the Council of Ancyra (314). However a sodomite was also barred from ordination (canon 18 of John the Faster (ca 580) and a boy who had been defiled was likewise barred (canon 19). It is probable that the Faster is making explicit an issue that is covered by canon 17 of the Council of Ancyra. (A canon, which in the form we now have it is rather opaque). It is not clear whether this ban on ordination was to do with some ontological change that takes place in the victim – a change in "orientation" perhaps? Or whether it demonstrates the wisdom of the Church whose experience was, and sadly still is, that one who has been abused as a boy may well go on to abuse others and is therefore a risk to the integrity of the priesthood in particular and the Church in general.

The challenge today.

The Church is now faced with a situation in the West that it has not encountered for some 1,500 years or more – a culture that is accepting of and may promote homosexual acts. But more than this it is a culture which without much searching is awash with sex, from internet porn sites and extra-marital dating agencies catering for every taste to all manner of marketing ploys aimed at selling one product or another even down to lingerie for little girls who cannot possibly have a real use for such things for at least five years.

When it comes to homosexuality there are several approaches: for the general population it is often accepted as a matter of taste – "I do not want to do that, but what he or she wants to do is nothing to do with me, good luck to them". For others, particularly in the

Christian Churches the response may be more subtle: "Well the ethical teaching of the Church was fixed a long time ago, we understand so much more about people now. The ethics must move with the times." Or even "Well they were made by God like that so it must be all right and they cannot avoid it." The revulsion felt by many towards homosexuality has been cleverly diverted into a loathing of paedophiles that are seen as entirely distinct from "gays and lesbians". Well perhaps they often are, but perhaps sometimes they are not.

How is the Orthodox Church to respond to this situation? I would like to make a number of suggestions.

First of all we need to stress the godly virtues of self-discipline and chastity. This is a fundamental pre-supposition for the Christian life from the day of Pentecost onwards. It is a major reason for fasting – which also involves restraint from sexual relations just as much as it involves abstaining from certain food and drink. We can do without sex as hundreds of thousands of monastics have demonstrated through the ages. However the Church has always recognised that sex is a very powerful passion, greater even than the desire to eat or drink, but it can be controlled. It is nevertheless God given and part of what it is to be a human being.

Second the whole notion of a fixed sexual "orientation" should be resisted. In strange circumstances all of us can do more or less anything! We change, and can change. The Christian is one who changes to the good, but a saint is one who has changed much.

Third the Church needs to recover her teachings about fantasy. One of the reasons that the Church disliked actors was that they lived in fantasy. The difficulty

now is that through the internet everyone may have access to the most extraordinary things – every kind of sexual depravity that one can imagine and a whole lot that one never imagined in one's wildest dreams. Because these things may be exciting to an individual who willingly or unwillingly finds them, does not mean that they are *de facto* depraved: though it would be an excellent thing if they resisted these things in the future!

Finally the Church will and always has encountered people who are strongly drawn to homosexual acts and commit them.. They need help and love to encourage and assist them to change their lives to bring them back into proper balance. As do we all, for we are all sinners. Over and over again let spiritual fathers remember the great canon 102 Of the Quinisext Council (692):

"For the whole account is between God and him to whom the pastoral rule has been delivered, to lead back the wandering sheep and to cure that which is wounded by the serpent: and that he may neither cast them down into the precipices of despair, nor loosen the bridle towards dissolution, or contempt of life; but in some way or other, either by means of astringency, or by greater softness and mild medicines to resist this sickness and exert himself for the healing of the ulcer, now examining the fruits of his repentance and wisely managing the man who is called to higher illumination....."⁴²

It is to this higher illumination that we are all called by the Orthodox Church, and just as all sin, so all are made alive in Christ: His life, the Life of God Himself, and to Him be the glory, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

¹ *Cold Comfort Farm* is a bucolic satire on the works of the author Mary Webb.

² King John of England married his second wife Isabella of Angouleme when she was 12, he was 33. Although it was said that they had intercourse with her from their marriage – his courtiers complained at how late into the morning they remained in bed, she did not actually conceive until she was 18. Likewise Mahomet is supposed to have had a wife aged 10. While one can now be very uncertain about any events of Mahomet's life, what is certain is that when the story came to be written in the 9th century, to take a wife so young was not considered odd.

³ Parts of the Kinsey Reports regarding diversity in sexual orientations are frequently used to support the common estimate of 10% for homosexuality in the general population. However, the findings are not absolute, and Kinsey himself avoided and disapproved of using terms like homosexual or heterosexual to describe individuals, asserting that sexuality is prone to change over time, and that sexual behavior can be understood both as physical contact as well as purely psychological phenomena (desire, sexual attraction, fantasy). Instead of three categories (heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual), a seven-category Kinsey Scale system was used.

⁴ And this would be my own pastoral experience. I know of at least two men who were in "stable" homosexual relationships for a many years yet are now happily married with contented wives.

⁵ See generally Am. Psychol. Ass'n, 7 *Encyclopedia of Psychol.* 260 (A.E. Kazdin ed., 2000); 2 Corsini [*"The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences...* (W.E. Craighead & C.B. Nemerooff eds., 3d ed. 2001)"], . . . at 683

⁶ Old Testament quotations are from the *New English Translation of Septuagint* (NETS)

⁷ This issue was dealt with particularly by St John of Damascus (c.657-749) and derived from a controversy with certain Moslems who did argue that everyone was individually created. St John argued that this teaching was immoral as it implied that God would bless, by the gift of children, a sinful act: rape. He thus argued that we are created as co-creators with God.

⁸ It may be argued that an extremely small number of human are born with uncertain gender. This is a complex topic well beyond the scope of this paper but the answer lies somewhere along the lines of the previous paragraph.

⁹ See also Leviticus 18:22: "and you shall not sleep with a male as in a bed of a woman, for it is an abomination" – also Leviticus 20:13, where it is required that they are put to death.

¹⁰ *Jerusalem Bible* translation.

¹¹ *Early Christian Writings* Penguin p. 206

¹² *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Vol. XIV The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, p408

Sermon by Protopresbyter John Raffan at the Clergy Conference

Church of Ss. Cyril & Methodios, Mansfield 10th May 2011

Your Eminence, Your Graces, Dear Brothers and Co-Celebrants, Dear Friends in this most hospitable of Communites, and All who have come to the Patronal Feast of this Church!

Our Church is constantly inviting us to celebrate the great and wonderful mysteries of divine grace, things which by their very magnitude surpass our comprehension and which are easily crowded out of our field of perception and awareness by the multitude of our daily cares and preoccupations. They are things that, since they support and bear our whole life and being, easily pass as unnoticed as the air we breathe.

Our service this evening is no different. In this Paschal period our attention is turned to the surpassing reality of the Resurrection and we are invited to experience its inexhaustible power to raise up, re-constitute and re-orient our lives in sharing in the joy, disbelief and astonishment of the myrrh-bearing women. The life that wells forth from the tomb of Christ as from a hidden, unapproachable and Life-Giving spring calls on us to respond with wonder and thanksgiving, allowing the super-abundant grace of the Resurrection to invade, pervade and support our whole being so that we may rejoice in the 'sacred Pascha, the mystic Pascha, the Pascha that is Christ the Redeemer, the Pascha that has opened for us the gates of Paradise, the Pascha of delight, the Lord's Pascha, the Pascha that is ransom from sorrow'.

This evening, however, our Church also invites us to another feast, the Birthday party of the Queen of cities, Constantinople, which this year celebrates her 1,681st anniversary. The city of Constantinople has an importance so great and so all-pervasive for our experience of the Church that we very often fail to perceive it or take account of it. Indeed, every aspect of our faith and life in the Church is mediated through the tradition of this city. The notice in the Synaxarion for today states simply: On the 11th of this month we celebrate the Birthday or Inauguration of this God-protected and Queen of Cities, dedicated in a unique way to our Lady, the Holy Theotokos and forever saved by her. This alone is sufficient to remind us how much our devotion to the Theotokos is shaped by this city. Whether we are

singing the service of the Paraklisis or of the Akathistos, whether we are celebrating the feasts of the Veil of Protection or of the Life-Giving Spring, we are being brought back again and again to her City. Indeed, we cannot open our mouths to sing in the Church at all without paying indirect homage to this City with every breath and every inflection of our voice: our musical tradition as well as our liturgy and liturgical order, all grew and matured here and from here were disseminated throughout the Church.

The writer of the note in the Synaxarion speaks naturally of 'this city', presupposing that we all live in this city, and in a sense, of course, we all do. Our dogmatic understandings and church discipline are all expressed not only through the decisions of the Church Councils held in or around the capital, but equally through the way in which these decisions were incorporated into the public law of the Empire, and these things all remain with us as a living reality, even now that the Empire is a thing of the past. Even those cherished aspects of Orthodoxy which have their origin elsewhere are mediated for us through Constantinople: we read the Desert Fathers through Paul Evergetinos, we sing the hymns of the Church in Jerusalem as integrated into the worship of the great Studite monasteries and of the Great Church, the tradition of Syrian hymnography as exemplified by the hymns of Saint Ephraim is made alive for us through the Kontakia of Romanos, the art and architecture of the Church with their manifold influences reach us through the prism of the Queen of Cities. The list of our debts to Constantinople is unending. The Saints we commemorate every day are primarily those contained in the Synaxarion of Constantinople. Today, for example, we commemorate among others Saint Mokios, a saint martyred in Byzantium in 295 and who had his Church in Constantinople which contained not only his own relics but also the relics of other Saints of the city, including perhaps most famously, his fellow unmercenary saint who had set up the largest free hospital in the Empire, Saint Sampson the Hospitable.

The Saints to whom this Church in Mansfield is dedicated, Cyril and Methodius, and whose feast we

also celebrate today, are once again intimately bound up with the history of Constantinople. They had been born sons of a high-ranking Imperial official in Thessalonica, but while still in their teens their father died and they were taken to Constantinople by their new guardian Theoktistos, who at that time was head of the Imperial Foreign Ministry, the Logothetis tou dromou. Here in the capital Cyril and Methodius studied with the great scholar and later Patriarch Photius, imbibing not only the encyclopedic learning of their teacher, but also immersing themselves in the culture and traditions of Constantinople. Cyril himself later taught as professor of philosophy at the newly founded University of Constantinople. In all their work as diplomats, as defenders of Orthodoxy, as missionaries, as teachers, as translators, as priests and as pastors, they carried with them and were carried by the city of Byzantium.

The culture that they transmitted in such a genial way to the Slavs had for centuries thereafter Byzantium as its fixed centre of reference. When the grandson of King Harold of England, Andrei Bogolubsky, Andrew the God-Loving, whose family had fled to Kiev after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, came to found the city of Vladimir and build the stunningly beautiful 'Pokrov' Church of the Protecting Veil in the north of Russia, he carried with him a miraculous icon of the Virgin from Constantinople and his inspiration was the vision of Andrew the Fool for Christ in the Church of the Theotokos at Vlachernae.

Our own position in this country as priests and as pastors, as ambassadors and defenders of Orthodoxy, as missionaries, as teachers and as translators in the widest sense, requires for us also be rooted and immersed in this same tradition, to strive to understand it and cultivate the shoot from the vine of Constantinople here in Britain, just as Saints Cyril and Methodius did in Slavonic lands. The Church teaches us that we receive most abundantly when we offer back in thanksgiving what we have been given: and to possess this precious tradition most surely we need to offer it to our flocks in as integral a manner as possible.

To be rooted in a tradition does not mean to belong to the past, to live in another fantastic place and time, to refuse to face the challenges of the present and to cut ourselves off from the society in which we live, nor does it mean that we cannot have a critical and creative relationship to that tradition, but it does mean that we always have an awareness that we are shaped and carried by forces that go far beyond ourselves, both in ways that we can

recognize and in ways that we cannot recognize, and that we are carried and guided in what we do by the Spirit that has always guided the Church, the Spirit that comes at Pentecost. It means that in trusting what we have received of this Spirit of Life of Truth, we trust also that the grace that makes up what is lacking, ἡ θεία χάρις τὰ ἔλλειποντα ἀναπληροῦσα, will provide whatever else is needed for the nurturing of our Church in Britain.

Moreover, our relationship with the Great Church is not a thing of the past but very much of the present. This is underlined for us by the fact that this year our Archbishop as a member of the Holy and Sacred Synod of Constantinople travels to Istanbul every month.

The Great Church has always been a source of unity, and its order and traditions are guarded as zealously in the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem as they are in Constantinople. It is also called to be a source of unity within our own parishes which are often multi-ethnic, within the Archdiocese and among all the Orthodox jurisdictions in this country which otherwise face increasing fragmentation.

When we stand firmly in the traditions of the Great Church we are not standing in an imaginary historical space, nor only in a present-day 'jurisdiction', rather we are standing above all under the protection of the Theotokos. As we heard, the Synaxarion speaks of the city dedicated in a unique way to our Lady, the Holy Theotokos and forever saved by her. Throughout Lent we read every day at the service of Matins:

'Ἐν τῷ Ναῷ ἐστῶτες τῆς δόξης σου, ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐστάντει νομίζομεν, Θεοτόκε, πύλη ἐπουράνιε, ἄνοιξον ἡμῖν τὴν θύραν τοῦ ἐλέους σου.'

Standing in the temple of your glory, we think we stand in heaven, O Theotokos. O gate of heaven, open to us the door of your mercy.

This is the surpassing reality that the Church invites us to experience with the feast of the Birthday of the Queen of Cities. This is the temple that we are called to help build in this country. And to this end we invoke today the prayers of Saints Cyril and Methodios. In the hymns we heard in our Vespers service the two Saints are described as 'Imitators of the Apostles' and we in turn seek to be imitators of Cyril and Methodios in all our own work in our various parishes. We congratulate today this Community which has a truly 'Apostolic' presence here in the Midlands of England and we pray that they may always be guided through the prayers of their patron saints.

Χριστὸς Ἄνεστη!

BRIDGING THE GULF BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND PASTORSHIP: Catechism and Administration

Archimandrite Vassilos Papavassiliou

Speech at the Clergy Conference 2011, Nottingham - Mansfield, 9th - 11th May

In his oration in defence of his flight to Pontus, St Gregory the Theologian describes pastoral ministry in the following way:

*"The scope of our art is to provide the soul with wings, to rescue it from the world and give it to God, and to watch over that which is in His image: if it abides, to take it by the hand; if it is in danger, to restore it; if ruined, to make Christ to dwell in the heart by the Spirit."*¹

St Gregory goes on to remind us that pastorship must be rooted in a theological understanding of ministry.

I began with reference to St Gregory the Theologian's comments on pastorship because I believe that there is today a chasm between theology and pastoral care. Sometimes people seem to speak of these two things as almost mutually exclusive. This is no doubt the reason His Eminence has asked me to speak on this topic.

There are two things His Eminence has asked me to touch upon in their relation to theology and pastorship: catechism and administration. And I will begin with catechism.

Theology and Pastorship in Catechism

Catechism and pastoral care share the same principle: that of meeting people where they are, coming down to their level, in order to then take them higher. Herein lies the challenge for theology in catechism. Theology is, on the whole, complicated, and a great deal of written theology out there seems to be written by theologians for theologians. A lot of the material that is written for the average layperson is too simplistic. Either we expect people to rise up to our level without a helping hand, or we come down to their level and leave them there.

Making theology approachable and palatable is not the same as leaving theology to one side. When people say that we should keep things simple, they too often imply that we should not bother with

complex subjects such as Trinity, Christology, ecclesiology, and so on. Or worse still, we oversimplify these subjects so much that we end up with heresies instead of Orthodox doctrines. But it is not the subjects themselves that are in need of simplification, it is our approach and the vocabulary we use. We too often assume that people know what we are talking about, and we expect them to be familiar with ecclesiastical and theological language. When instructing adults, we need to understand that we are not dealing with children, but we are often dealing with people who are simply not familiar with our vocabulary. The solution to this problem is not a complex one. If someone does not understand a sentence because it contains a couple of words he doesn't know, all he has to do is look them up in a dictionary. The result is that he now understands the sentence, while at the same time he has learned two new words. Likewise, making theology understandable does not mean we refuse to use any form of theological or ecclesiastical language - that we overlook subjects like Christology and patristics, and words like 'homoousios' or 'theanthropos'. Avoiding them simply means that the pupil's knowledge is no better now than it was when he started. And the next time he hears those words in church, as he inevitably will, he is none the wiser. When we use such terminology, and if we take catechism seriously we will inevitably have to, we should also stop to explain what exactly it is we are referring to.

Another point I would like to make about catechism, particularly in its connection with pastorship, is this: catechism is not just about informing people and teaching them things they didn't know. Some people claim that the catechist does not have to be a priest. Why not have trained lay theologians do catechism? In theory I agree that laypeople can do that job just as well and often better than we can. But there are two problems I see with a layperson instructing people in the faith.

The first is that, whether rightly or wrongly, a lot of people are not confident that what they are being taught by a layman, however well trained he or she is in Orthodox theology, is reliable. People still look to the priest, even the most uneducated, as more of an authority on Orthodoxy than a layperson. This is hardly surprising. As our Lord said, the sheep listen to the shepherd's voice. "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." (John 10:3-5)

The second problem with a layperson carrying out the role of the catechist is that there are many aspects of faith and theology which require a pastoral touch. This is also the reason that it is not adequate to simply give people literature to read without explanation and guidance. I recall a couple of simple catechetical books I read which touch upon complex and sensitive issues. In the attempt to make things as simple as possible, the material ended up grossly oversimplifying and therefore misrepresenting some traditional Orthodox views, and sounding very harsh and pastorally insensitive, completely disinterested in accounting for many questions a reader would inevitably have on such issues. Simply giving people books to read as a form of catechism is potentially damaging without a guide.

Catechism is not simply a study - it is a journey. The catechist's task is to lead people by the hand and to take them on a journey. And who better for the task than the pastor, the shepherd of the flock? In my own meagre experience, something which many people value just as much as the opportunity to learn about the faith, is the opportunity to develop a relationship with a priest, the opportunity to be able to ask questions and receive answers - questions not only on matters of belief and liturgical practice, but questions on personal issues.

Does a priest have to have theological training to do catechism? If we are going to prepare our own catechetical material, obviously we need to know theology. But there is catechetical material out there in various books and on the internet which every priest, provided he at least has sense enough to discern between good and bad sources,

can use and adjust as he deems fit. When dealing with questions and answers, again it is obviously better if we know our subject well, but I believe that clergy who are not theologically educated but who are gifted as pastors can be just as effective, if not more effective, in catechism than clergy who have received a formal theological education.

Another point I would like to make about catechism is that we often restrict it to non-Orthodox adults who wish to be received into the Orthodox Church. Sometimes what prompts this decision is the plan to marry an Orthodox partner. We should not refuse to catechise such people. In my experience, some begin catechism with the view that it is just another formality - one more box to be ticked in the list of things to do before your wedding - but often they become very enthusiastic about Orthodoxy during the catechism process, and often the Orthodox partner becomes keen to undergo instruction also. This brings me to another point: we must think also in terms of catechising and re-educating baptised Orthodox Christians. The sad reality is that the vast majority of Orthodox have had no instruction in the faith whatsoever. Furthermore, catechism does not always have to cover every aspect of the faith. There are many opportunities to provide guidance and instruction on specific matters, and I am thinking here predominantly of christenings and weddings. I believe we need to provide some guidance and instruction, even if it is for just one or two hours, for parents and godparents before christenings. I fail to see where the pastoral care lies in arranging endless baptisms week after week without any guidance whatsoever in regard to giving the child a Christian Orthodox upbringing, selecting a suitable godparent, naming the child, the meaning of the ceremony, etc. As far as marriages are concerned, I would like to point out that in some dioceses in America and Australia, it is not possible for a couple to get married without first going through an Orthodox marriage guidance seminar. Quite a few people have contacted our Archdiocese to ask if we have something similar. Unfortunately we do not. In light of the divorce statistics, it may be worth considering. But returning to baptism, I believe that instructing families and godparents before christenings is something we must begin doing as a matter of urgent priority. The infants we baptise are the future of our Church, and their parents and godparents are, for the most part, clueless about

Orthodoxy. And I think many would welcome some guidance and instruction in such cases. But in addition to the work of each priest and parish, it would be helpful if we had some guidance from the Archdiocese in this matter in the form of pamphlets on subjects such as baptism and marriage, so that we could all at least have some concise, simple literature that we could give to people when they come to see us.

Theology and Administration

If there seems to be a gulf between theology and pastorship, there is a far bigger one between theology and administration. Nowhere is this more evident than in the endless arguments about the running of the Church's affairs. So often we hear of quarrelling between clergy and lay leaders in the church, which inevitably leads to the question, 'who is in charge of the church? The priest or the chairman?' The answer is neither of them. The bishop is in charge. The representative of the bishop is the priest. The reason for this is clear: the person who is in charge is the one who presides at the liturgy, the one who serves at the altar and celebrates the Eucharist. And this is so because Christ is the head of the Church, and the centre of the Church's life is the Eucharist. As Archbishop Gregorios said in his introduction to last year's Clergy-Laity Conference: "What ever takes place in the Community should flow from the Holy Altar, where the Holy Gospel is kept as its very heart and on which the 'Holy Things for the holy' are offered to the faithful for the remission of sins and eternal life". This means two things. First of all, it means that the laypeople, including the committee and chairperson, are to look upon the priest as the bishop's representative, as though he is 'standing in' for the bishop. Secondly, it means that the priest's ministry is not his own, but the bishop's ministry which he carries out on his behalf. The priest, therefore, is not a bishop in his own parish. He cannot do as he pleases, but only what his bishop authorises him to do. All of this is made abundantly clear in 5 of the 7 epistles of St Ignatius of Antioch, which I believe remain of profound theological importance to ecclesiology. St Ignatius was concerned that the bishop should be the centre of Christian unity precisely because it is the

bishop who presides at the Eucharist. The Bishop is to preside in the place of Christ, and the presbyters and deacons are to preside in the place of the Apostles. But because we have forgotten all of this, we have ended up with a sharp divide between the priest and the lay leaders, between the liturgical and pastoral life of the church, and its administration, the former being governed by its own religious set of criteria, and the latter being governed by another, often secular, set of criteria. No wonder there is so often a conflict between clergy and committees. The heart of the church's administration must be the Holy Altar, the Eucharist, and that means that the leader of all of the Church's affairs, including its administration, is the one who presides at the altar, being the bishop or the priest who is ordained to do this on his behalf. It makes no theological sense for a layman to carry out the role of administrative leadership in the Church for the simple reason that he cannot celebrate the Eucharist, he cannot preside at the Divine Liturgy. And if the one who presides at the Liturgy is not in charge of all of the Church's affairs, then the Church is without a shepherd, without visible unity. I do not deny that, ever since St Ignatius, bishops have been milking his theology for all it's worth. What St Ignatius meant and what bishops would like to think he meant are not always one and the same thing. Nonetheless, I believe that his teachings on the episcopate are of paramount theological importance. If the person who has been entrusted with the care of the Church is not the person who presides at the holy altar, then the Eucharist, and therefore Christ, is not the heart of the Church's life.

My final point is this: all of these aspects of our ministry – catechism, pastoral care, administration – must not be kept in separate compartments. For the one is impoverished without the other. In isolation, all of these aspects of our priesthood are in danger of being distorted and alienated from the theology and spirit of the Church. All aspects of our ministry – theology, worship, catechism, pastorship, administration – have one and the same purpose: to lead people into the unity of the faith, and to guide them into the knowledge and love of God.

¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Oration II: In Defence of his Flight to Pontus, and his Return, after his Ordination to the Priesthood, with an Exposition of the Character of the Priestly Office' in A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series (ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace; Edinburgh/Grand Rapids: T&T Clark/Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 7:209.

Beware of earthly treasure Is capitalism a spiritual failure?

by Aaron Taylor

As a resident for two years of Greece, an ostensibly Orthodox Christian country, I grew accustomed to seeing graffiti which proclaimed, "Down with capitalism!", or some such thing. But concerning "capitalism" merely as a way of organising a country's economic system, Orthodox Christians can have rather little to say qua Orthodox Christians. There is no clear teaching either in the New Testament or in subsequent Orthodox tradition that government policy, businesses, the "marketplace", or – to use that loathsome word – "consumers" should have greater or lesser control over the flow of capital. Given the right circumstances, economies which lean toward any of these factors can either help or hinder Orthodox in living in accordance with Christianity. After all, contra Max Weber, an economic system cannot have a "spirit" in the theological sense.

It is true, however, that the free market, if treated as sacrosanct, can subtly or explicitly encourage attitudes which are inimical to Christian life. This is particularly true in our day of mega-corporations, advertising, and consumerism. Some ideology, no matter how tacit in expression or apparently objective in conception, must lie at the root of all economic policies or decisions. Even the most scientific of economists, if such a characterisation is not already somewhat misleading, must have some conception of "good" or at least "desirable" if he or she is to have any criteria for acting.

In this area, without in any way suggesting that right action can be deduced infallibly from the principles Orthodoxy offers, we at least have something to say. Human beings are made in the image of God, and to attain to his likeness, he desires first that we love him with all of our heart and strength and second that we love our neighbour as ourselves. This means that the chief good, and with it the essential nature of man, is non-material. We mustn't set our hearts on earthly treasure. It also



means that we must constantly go out from ourselves if we are to behave as moral creatures. The basic posture of the Christian is an altruistic one, centred on self-sacrifice. Christ says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ... " (Matthew 25:40). St Basil the Great says, "Resolve to treat the things in your possession as belonging to others".

It is surely clear that such an ethic is basically incompatible with any kind of

ideological capitalism. A case can be, and sometimes is, made that people must be entirely unconstrained in order for their altruism to have any moral justification. This is a debatable point. What is not debatable is that this argument is typically only a way of dismissing objections to unrestrained capitalism in the economic sense. No one to my knowledge seriously justifies the free market on the grounds that it enables a morally efficacious altruism. We do not object to socialised medicine because we want so badly to build free hospitals out of our own pockets. This is seen most clearly in the philosophy of Ayn Rand, who speaks of "the virtue of selfishness".

Is ideological capitalism a spiritual failure? Not, perhaps, *per se*. But it seems dangerous from a truly Orthodox Christian perspective to regard economic capitalism as much more than the lesser of two, equally materialist, evils. As that perceptive critic of both Soviet and American society, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, saw so clearly, the explicit tyranny of communism at least had the virtue of highlighting in a rather stark way for those who suffered from it the essentially spiritual nature of man. Capitalism, by contrast, while it does us the favour of sparing our lives, tends to lull us into a kind of moral sleep. We begin to forget that "here have we no continuing city" (Hebrews 13:14). It is difficult to say which is, in the end, worse.

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Thursday, 9th September 2010

SPEECH BY SUBDEACON CHARALAMBOS (PETROS) GEORGIOU ON HIS ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

Church of the 12 Apostles, Hertfordshire,
Wednesday, 29th June 2011

"Your Eminence, reverend Fathers, my family and friends,

I do not think that the calling of Christ to ministry is ever and easy one to hear, much less to respond to. "Who will ascend into the Lord's mountain, or who will stand in his Holy Place?" (Psalm 23) It is certainly not a "job" to be taken lightly, for even as Saint Paul says in reference to the authority which he was bestowed "I fear lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve, so your thoughts should be corrupted from the simplicity which is towards Christ." (2 Corinthians)

When I was young, I attended a Roman Catholic Primary school, where, I learned some of the basics of our faith. However, during my secondary years, in my desperation to fit into my surroundings, being racist and markedly secular, I tried to cast off both my culture and my religion, thinking that by doing so I could achieve happiness and acceptance. However, acceptance didn't come and far from fulfilling me, the life that I had made for myself bore a void into my soul, as though my heart was bleeding. Which indeed it was. Having read about Father Seraphim Rose's

conversion years later, I can identify with this living hell, the infernal feeling that is brought about by man's separation from his master and maker.

And yet as I have said above, when God calls it is difficult to answer. In reacquainting myself with the Church of my Fathers, that is, our Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, I have rediscovered both our God and my culture and found, much to my surprise and delight, that one feeds into the other.

I cannot honestly say that I felt this call from my youth, though my sister used to joke to her friends about me that "Oh, he is going to become a priest when he grows up!"

In coming to this holy ministry, I thank God for all that he has done for me, for inasmuch as I am not worthy. I would also like to thank the following people:

First of all, I would like to thank all my friends, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, religious, secular or otherwise. All of our experiences, through good and bad situations have helped to bring me to this point. I would

like to thank the trustees of the church, k. Louis Loizou and k. Christakis Americanos, who have provided me with help and support during the past year and to thank them for bringing me into the church to work.

I would like to thank the chairmen, chairwomen, and all the committees both past and present, including the Βοηθητική Αδελφότητα; for all that they have done and continue to do day in and day out for the benefit of our community. I do not doubt that without their presence and dedication for the beauty of God's house, this community would be far poorer, spiritually and physically speaking, than it is today.

I would like to thank the chanters of the community, both past and present: Our Protopsaltis Alexandros Procopiou and our former Lambadarios and my former teacher Panagiotis Stavrinides for their help and imparting their knowledge in order to help me since my arrival here. 8 years ago, k. Panagiotis took my brother and I under his wing, teaching us the τάξις of the services and who sent us to help out at the community in Milton Keynes. I would like to thank our former Neogoros Kostantinos Prodromou, foreverything he has done for me, for his advice and his patience.

I would like to extend my thanks to our priests P. Nikodemos and P. Demetrianos, for their filial love and patience with me in the run up to this day. I would also like to extend my thanks to my first Father-Confessor, Father Philip Hall, who is unable to be with us today. In addition I would like to thank Father Chrysostomos and to Father-Deacon Modestos, who has been a great influence on

my life through the Scouting movement.

I would like to especially thank Father Joseph. There are so many reasons why I could thank Father, for taking me under his wing and being my teacher at the school of Byzantine music, for bringing me to the analogion, for his spiritual support, especially during my PGCE last year, for his daily advice which is always good but sometimes hard to take in. I thank you for all of this, and for much more.

At this point, I think it would be appropriate to thank my family. For all of the times that you drove me from Scouts, to Byzantine music, to Violin, to choirs and orchestras, when we have played, laughed and joked together, for our late night/early morning discussions, and for those times when you had to put up with my questions, my tantrums, my shenanigans; for coming to concerts, to operas, to a miriad of different things I have dragged you to and more; for your help in times of trouble, for your advice in times of trial and despair, and above all for the love that you continue to show for me, I thank you and love you all.

It has been said that behind every great man there is a great woman. I cannot claim to be a great man but, I believe that my wife is a truly great woman. Everything that I have said above applies to her, and more.

Finally, I would like to thank you, your Eminence, for accepting me to become a member the holy Diaconate in Christ. I would also like to thank you for your unfailing support for the young people of our Archdiocese."

ΕΙΔΗΣΕΙΣ - NEWS

ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ

Η Άγια και Ιερά Σύναδος: Μάρτιος - Αύγουστος 2011

Σημαντικό φωτογραφικό στηγμότυπο παρελθόντη στην Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Θυατείρων και Μεγάλης Βρετανίας, από Συνεδρία πής Άγιος και Ιερᾶς Συνόδου του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου, στης ράχες Ιουνίου του 2011.

Τήν Άγιαν και Ιερά Σύνοδον τού Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου, προεδρευομένην υπό τής ΑΘ. Παναγιόπητος, τού Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχού κυρίου κυρίου Βαρθολομαίου, αποτελούν οι κάτωθι Σεβ. Αρχιερείς (όπως διακρίνονται στην φωτογραφία):



Εκεινώντας δεξιά από τον Παναγιώτατο Πατριάρχη:

- Θυατείρων και Μ. Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγόριος (12.12.1970) - 1ος δεξιά,
- Τρανουπλέως κ. Γερμανός (14.01.1973) - 2ος δεξιά,
- Ιμβρου και Τενέδου κ. Κύριλλος (27.10.1985) - 3ος δεξιά,
- Πριγκιπονήσου κ. Ιάκωβος (25.12.1987) - 4ος δεξιά,
- Άγιου Φραγκίσκου κ. Γεράσιμος (09.02.2002) - 5ος δεξιά,
- Κορέας κ. Αμβρόσιος (05.02.2006) - 6ος δεξιά,

Εκεινώντας άριστερά από τον Παναγιώτατο Πατριάρχη:

- Γέρων Χαλκρίδονος κ. Αθανάσιος (24.09.1972) - 1ος άριστερά (δεν έχει υπογράψει),
- Θεοδόρουπολεως κ. Γερμανός (06.02.1972) - 2ος άριστερά,
- Καρπάθου και Κάποιας κ. Αμβρόσιος (16.06.1983) - 3ος άριστερά,
- Περγάμου κ. Ιωάννης (22.06.1986) - 4ος άριστερά,
- Ικονίου κ. Θεολόγης (10.09.2000) - 5ος άριστερά,
- Ρεθύμνης και Αλυποτάσσων κ. Εγγένιος (28.05.2005) - 6ος άριστερά.

Διακρίνονται έπισης ο προσφάτως χειροτονηθείς Σεβασμωτάτος Μητροπολίτης Προύσης κ. Επιτοδούρος (εγκαίνιας άριστερά από τόν Πατριάρχη) και ο νέος Υπογραμμούτεας Πανοστιόλ. Διάκονος κ. Ιωακείμ (τελευταίος δεξιά από τόν Πατριάρχη).

Χειροτονία εἰς Διάκονον τοῦ Γρηγορίου Wellington

Στον Ιερό Ναό της Άγιας Αικατερίνης Βασίλεως Βορείου Λονδίνου, έφασε χώρα την Κυριακή 26 Ιουνίου η χειροτονία εἰς Διάκονον, τού εών τότε υποδιακόνου Gregory Wellington, από τή σεπτή δεξιά τού Σεβασμωτάτου Αρχιεπισκόπου Θυατείρων και Μεγάλης Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγορίου. Η χειροτονία ήταν συγκριτική καθώς από τον Επικλητισμό Βαρισκότων ή σύνγονος και τή κορη τού Νεοχειροτονηθέντος, ένων ό μικρος τού μισός παρακαλουμούσε από τόν Ιερό τά τεκτανόμενα ώς μοιθευόμενος Νεωκόρος. Τήν χειροτονία, ή όποια τελεπται πάντα έν μέσω τής Θείας Λειτουργίας και συγκεκριμένα άμεσως μετά τής Αγιασμού τών Τιμών Δώρων, παρακολουθήσαν και οι γονεῖς τού πατέρος Γρηγορίου, άλλα και άλλοι συγγενεῖς και φίλοι. Τήν ημέρα που έφορτάζεται ού Όσιος Δαυΐδ έν Θεσσαλονίκη παραφρέθηκε γιά τήν χειροτονία ο πνευματικός τού Διακόνου, Πρωτοπρεσβύτερος Σπυρίδωνα Καλαϊτζόγλου από τήν Παναγία τήν Αχειροποίητο τής Θεοσασλανίκης.



Απονομή πιστοποιητικών τής Σχολής Άγιογραφίας τής Ελληνορθόδοξου Κοινόπτηρος Άγιων Αντώνιου τού Μεγάλου και Τηρίου Προδρόμου, Islington

Μέσα στό πλαίσιο τών έκδηλωσεων για τά 45 χρόνια από τήν



ιδρυση τής Κοινόπτηρος Άγιων Αντώνιου τού Μεγάλου και Τηρίου Προδρόμου (Islington), τό Σάββατο, 18 Ιουνίου 2011, παραμονή τής έορτης τών Άγιων Παντού, τελεσθήκε στόν όμανυμο Ιερό Ναό, Μέγας Πανηγυρικός Έστερεινός, χροστατούντος τού Σεβασμωτάτου Αρχιεπισκόπου Θυατείρων και Μεγάλης Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγορίου, ένω έψαλε ή χοροδία τού Ναού όπο τήν διευθυνση τού κ. Μαρούλα.

Κατό τή διάρκεια τής Ακολούθιας τού Εστερεινού δ Σεβασμώτατος χειροβέβητος σε Οίκονυμό τόν π. Θωμάδη Αρτέμη έφεμρειο τού Ναού, ώς αποτέλεσμα τής ζεξέπαινης προσφοράς και διακονίας του στήν Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή.

Μετά τή πέρας τού Εστερεινού έγινε ή δπονομή τών πιστοποιητικών στούς μαθητών τών μαθημάτων τής Άγιογραφίας από τόν Σεβασμώτατο Αρχιεπισκόπο.

Στήν έκδηλωση τής άπονομής παρευρέθησαν και χαιρέτησαν ή έκπρωπων τού ουλάργου Έλληνοκυπρίων γυναικών «Αράχνη» κ. Έλευθερία Κωνσταντίνου, ή δάσκαλος τής Άγιογραφίας κ. Έλευθερίος Φουλίδης και ή Πρόδρομος τής Κοινόπτηρος κ. Νίκα Σεργίδη, ή θόποις, κατά τόν χαιρετισμό τής, έναρεθηκε στούς κανόνες και τούς νόμους τής Άγιογραφίας οι ίπποιοι βοήθουν τούς μαθητές στην μορφοποίηση τού έστερειο πους κόμου.

Μεταξύ τών άλλων άνεφρε, έρι ή είκονα είναι ένα δριστο μέσο που άπλα και άθροιμα είσερχεται στόν ψυχικό κόσμο τών μαθητών, άλλα και δλων τών πιστών και βάζει τήν δίκη της σφραγίδα. Είναι ή άριστη είσαγωγή στόν κόσμο τής Έκκλησίας. Σέ έναν κόσμο με τόσο κοινωνικό σκότος, ο μαθητής τής είκονας διδάσκεται νά άντιστεκεται και νά έλπιζει Τό φῶς τής είκονας τον παρηγορεί. Τού χορίζει μία διαφάνεια στήν ζωή και τά έργα του. Η είκονα για τά μαθητή γίνεται ή μεγάλος διδάσκαλος του».

Ο Σεβασμώτατος Αρχιεπισκόπος έπισκεψηκε τήν έκθεση τών έργων τών μαθητών, στήν αιθουσα τελετών τού Ναού, και συνεχέρι τούς μαθητές και τόν δάσκαλο τους για τήν άραια προσπάθεια που κατοπάλουν στόν χώρο τής Άγιογραφίας. (Πηγή: Απενεγρ.)

Έφυγε από τή ζωή ο Αρχιμανδρίτης Σωφρόνιος Παπαδόπουλος

Έφυγε από τή ζωή ο προφίλης σε δλους, πρώτην Ιεραπότης Προϊστάμενος τής κοινόπτηρος Τριών Ιεραρχών, Leeds, Αρχιμανδρίτης Σωφρόνιος Παπαδόπουλος. Ό π. Σωφρόνιος άπειρθεσε στήν 10 Ιουλίου τού 2011, στό Νοσοκομείο τής Πάρος, σε ηλικία 85 ετών.

Υπήρχε ή λερός τής έν λόγο κοινόπτηρος τού Leeds έπι 33 έπι τό 1966 μέχρι και τήν άρωπτη πρεσβητηρίου του, τό 1999. Ό π. Σωφρόνιος ήταν για τήν κοινόπτηρα αύτή κάπι προστέρευτο όπο τόπο Ιερέας. Ήταν άνθρωπος με ήγειτικά προσόντα, ή όποιος ακούραστα, δόηγμα τήν νεοουστόπιτη μηρι Ελληνική κοινόπτηρα τού Leeds τού 1966, στήν κοινόπτηρα πού γνωρίζουμε σήμερα. Όσοι είχαν τήν τιμή νά υπηρετήσουν ύπο τήν πνευματική καθοδήγηση του, γνωρίζουν πόσο ζήλο και ένθυμοισαμό είχε για τά θέματα τής κοινόπτηρος και πόσο εμπειρος και ικανος ήγέτης ήταν. Όλοι θυμούνται έπισης τήν άψογη τάξη με τήν οποία τελούσε δλες τής έκκλησιαστικές άκολουθεις και τά μυστήρια και τήν μελωδική και δυνατή φωνή του με τήν οποία έψαλε τούς ύμνους στή Θεία Λειτουργία, στά μυστήρια και ιδιαίτερα στής άκολουθεις τής Μεγαλομάρτυρος Μαρίνας.

Η κηδεία του έπειτα στό ξλωράκια τής έπαρχης Πάρος. Τήν κοινόπτηρα έκπρωσηπόντα στόν Ιερότικος Προϊστάμενος π. Σωμουήλη Κουστογένης ή έπιτημος Πρόδρομος Κ. Αντώνης Παύλου, ή Αντί πρόδρομος τού ΔΣ κ. Ιάσονας Καβάλης και ή πρώτην Πρόδρομος τής Βοηθητικής Άδελφοράτης και Κατερίνα Θεοδώρων. Τό ΔΣ χρηματοδότησε ένα στεφάνι με τόν τελευταίο χαροπιστό έκ μέρους δλων τών μελών τής κοινόπτηρα. Στόν Ιερό Ναό τών Τριών Ιεραρχών έπειτα στή τρισάγιο στήν μνήμη τού π. Σωφρόνιου τήν Κυριακή 17 Ιουλίου, ήμερα τής Άγιας Μεγαλομάρτυρος Μαρίνας.

Αιώνια του ή μηνήμη.
Ανάρτηση από κοινοποιηση τού π. Κάστα Τασκιρίδη, Προέδρου ΔΣ.

Η Εορτή τών Άγιων Διδόκεια Αποστόλων στήν διμώνυμη Κοινόπτηρα Μέ Ιδιαίτερη κατάνυξη ηελεθηκον οι έπισησ εργασιμο πρός την



τῶν Ἁγίων Δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων τήν Τετάρτη 29η Ιουνίου καὶ Πέμπτη 30η Ιουνίου 2011.

Τίς Ἱερές Ἀκολουθίες τέλεσε ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων καὶ Μεγάλης Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγόριος, συμπαραστατόμενος ἀπό Ἅρχιερεis ἄλλων Ὀρθοδόξων Ἑκκλησιῶν τούς ἔσχετον στὸ Λονδίνο.

Οἱ Ἅρχιερεis ποὺ πῆραν μέρος ἦταν (ἀγγλιστι):

- His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira & Great Britain (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople)
- His Eminence Archbishop Eilsey of Sourozh (Patriarchate of Moscow)
- The Most Revd Archbishop Iossif of Western & Southern Europe (Patriarchate of Romania)
- The Most Revd Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany & Great Britain (Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia)
- The Most Revd Archbishop Anatolii of Tropaeou (Archdiocese of Thyateira)
- The Rt Revd Bishop Athanasios of Tropaeou (Archdiocese of Thyateira)

Ἄκουμ, πῆραν μέρος πατέρι μὲ τοὺς Ἱερεῖς τοῦ Ναοῦ καὶ ἄλλοι Ἱερεῖς ἀπό τὴν Ἑκκλησία τῆς Ἀντιόχειας, τῆς Σερβίας καὶ ἄλλων τῶν παραπάνω Ἑκκλησιῶν, συνοδεύοντας τοὺς Ἅρχιερεis τοὺς.

Οἱ Σεβασμιώτατος, τής Ἱδια Τετάρτη, 29η Ιουνίου, χειροτόνησε σὲ Διάκονο τὸ Πέτρο Γεωργίου, ὁ ὁποῖος θα ἐξυπηρετεῖ τὴν Κοινότητα τῶν Ἁγίων Δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων.

Τήν Πέμπτη μετά τὴν Θεία Λειτουργία ὅλοι οἱ Ἅρχιερεis καὶ ἀντιπρόσωποι τῶν Ὀρθοδόξων Ἑκκλησιῶν πραγματοποιοῦσαν τὴν καθιερώμενὴν ἡ Πανορθόδοξη συνέλευση τοὺς.

Τίς Ἱερές Ἀκολουθίες ἐλάμπτυναν μὲ τὴν παρουσία καὶ τὴν φωνὴν τοὺς Ἅρχοντας Πρωτοψάλτης κ. Λουκοῦργος Ἀγγελόπουλος καὶ μέλη τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Βιζαντινῆς Χορωδίας ποὺ ἥρθαν εἰδικά ἀπό τὴν Αθήνα.

Παρόντες στοὺς ἐπίσημους ἑόρταισμούς ἦταν ὁ Γενικός Πρόεδρος τῆς Κύπρου κ. Γεώργιος Τεωργίου, ο Ἀεροπορικός Ακόλουθος στὴν Ἑλληνικὴν Πρεσβεία στὸ Λονδίνο Ἀντισημαγόνος Γεώργιος Τσιώτσης, ὁ Προεδρὸς τῶν Ἑλληνορθόδοξων Κοινοτήτων Μεγάλης Βρετανίας κ. Μάριος Μηνιδῆς, ἀρκετοὶ Πρόεδροι Ἑκκλησιῶν καὶ ἄλλων συμμετείων, καὶ πλήθυς πιστῶν.

Ο προεδρὸς τῆς Κοινότητος, κ. Λούης Λοΐζου, καλωσόρισε τοὺς φιλοδενδρινούς στὴν Κοινότητα καὶ προσέφερε μέσω τοῦ Ἱεροτικῶς Προϊστάμενού του Πρωτοπρεσβύτερου Ιωσῆ του Παλιούρα, δόρα σὲ ὄλους.

Οἱ κυρίες τῆς ἀδελφότητας μὲ ἐπικεφαλῆ την Πρόεδρο κ. Μαρία Χρονία, δεξιώθηκαν ὄλους τοὺς παρευρισκομένους.

Ανάρτηση ἀπό κοινοτικοῦ τοῦ Ἱερατικῶν Προϊστάμενού τοῦ Ἱεροῦ Ναοῦ Ἁγίων Δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων. Πρωτοπρεσβύτερου Ιωσῆ του Παλιούρα

Dedication of an icon in Lancaster



On the evening of Wednesday, 6th July 2011, an icon of Christ flanked by His Mother and St. John the Beloved Disciple, together with depictions of Ss. George the Great Martyr and Ann, Mother of the Theotokos, was dedicated at the Anglican priory church of St. Mary in Lancaster as an act of thanksgiving for Dennis G. Mendoros' year of office as High Sheriff of Lancashire (2010-2011). The icon, the work of the Romanian iconographer, Cristi Covrig, is here shown with the High Sheriff (to the right of the icon) and Father Iakovos Kassinos (who

represented His Eminence the Archbishop at the ceremony) and Cristi Covrig (to the left).

Ordinations

During the month of June, Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain ordained two subdeacons to the Diaconate. On Sunday, 26th June, he ordained Gregory Wellington at the Greek Orthodox Church of St Catherine, Barnet, London, and on Wednesday, 29th June, he ordained Charalambos Georgiou (renaming him Petros) at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Twelve Apostles, Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

Third Meeting of the Pan-Orthodox Episcopal Assembly

On 30th June, the Bishops of the Pan-Orthodox Assembly for the British Isles held their third meeting at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Twelve Apostles, Hatfield, Hertfordshire. For the first time, the Bishops of the Assembly concelebrated at the Divine Liturgy on the occasion of the host Community's patronal feast. Archbishop Gregorios, the Chairman of the Assembly, preached during the Divine Liturgy. Following the service, the Bishops were guests at a festal meal provided by the Community, after which the Bishops held their meeting. The Bishops discussed preparation for Holy Communion, mixed marriages, canonical matters regarding the transfer of clergy from one diocese to another, catechetical materials, and the training of clergy and catechists.

The General Synod of the Church of England

Between 8th and 12th July, the General Synod of the Church of England met in Tirana. His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and all Albania was the special ecumenical guest of the Synod and of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, who introduced Archbishop Anastasios to the Synod as the Christian leader who had rebuilt the church in Albania after 1990. In his address to the Synod, Archbishop Anastasios noted that 'from 1967 to 1990, an atheist constitution which banned all expressions of religion brought about the complete dissolution of the church in Albania.'

In 1991 he arrived for the first time in Albania in Tirana as the newly appointed leader of the church.

"Together with a group of old and harassed men, we made our way from the airport to the ruined Cathedral of Tirana. In order to express the essential message of my mission, I asked each one of those present to take a candle, and inquired how to say the greeting "Christ is risen" in Albanian. I lit the candle exclaiming, "Kristi ungjali", that is, "Christ is Risen". One after the other, the candles of the few believers were lit and they answered: "Vertete ungjali", "Truly He is Risen!" And their eyes were full of tears and light. From then on, "Christ is Risen" has become the watchword of the Orthodox Church in Albania."

"I visited as many cities and villages as possible where there had formerly been Orthodox communities. People began to come together and hear the Gospel message at Liturgies, most of which took place in the open air – under trees or in the ruins of old churches. The central message of the sermons, of the instructional effort, of the spiritual activities was that Christ – crucified, buried and risen – is "the light of the world". There is hope, however dark everything may seem".

"Altogether 150 new churches were built, 160 smaller churches were restored and 70 buildings to house the administration of the dioceses, schools, medical centres... About 460 parishes were organised in towns and villages."

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania receives the Lambeth Cross

The Lambeth Cross, a distinction for foreign church leaders, was recently awarded to Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, by Dr. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Upon receiving the cross, Archbishop Anastasios quoted T.S.Elliott: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?", adding among other things the need for everyone to "approach and familiarize themselves with the 'wisdom of the cross'." The Archbishop of Canterbury said "The revival of the Orthodox Church in Albania is owing most to its leader, whose spiritual and intellectual capabilities, his character's strength, his humility and holiness, have been a beacon for many in the Europe of our time".

Obituaries

In July, three priests who served our Holy Archdiocese reposed in the Lord: Archimandrite Sophronios Papadopoulos, Archimandrite Athanasios Ledwich, and Oeconomos Andreas Ioannides.

Archimandrite Sophronios Papadopoulos passed away on Sunday, 10th July 2011 at Paphos Hospital at the age of 85. He served as priest-in-charge of the Community of the Three Hierarchs, Leeds, for 33 years (1966-1999). He was a gifted leader who laboured for the then newly established and small Greek Orthodox Community of Leeds to become the thriving Community it is today. He will be remembered by all for his devotion and his zeal for every aspect of church life.

Archimandrite Athanasios Ledwich departed this life on Wednesday, 20th July 2011 at St Helena's Hospital in Colchester at the age of 64. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, and was a priest of the Anglican Church before he became Orthodox. He was made a Deacon of the Orthodox Church in 1986 and a Priest in 1987 by Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira. As a priest he served the Orthodox Communities of Rugby, Colchester and Ipswich. He established an Orthodox school in Edgbaston, Birmingham, and the Hermitage of the Most-holy Mother of God in Manningtree, North Essex.

Oeconomos Andreas Ioannides was ordained Deacon and Priest in the year 1968 and served the Community of the Holy Trinity, Brighton for many years until 2004, when he returned to Cyprus.

HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP GREGORIOS' DIARY

MAY

- In the morning, His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of St. George the Great Martyr in Kingston-upon-Thames, being entertained to lunch by the Community afterwards.
- In the morning, he received Lavrentios Lavretiadis. In the evening, he presided at a meeting in connection with the establishment of a Greek Orthodox Secondary School in North London.
- In the morning, he presided at the funeral of Mrs. Maria Petrou Yiannoulou at the church of St. John the Theologian in Hackney.
- He left for Constantinople in the morning. On arrival, he was received in private audience by His All-Holiness. Later, he had supper with the other Synodic bishops.
- Throughout the day, he participated in sessions of the Holy Synod. In the evening, he was a guest at a Dinner held at Beyti's restaurant in Florya.
- In the morning, he visited various offices within the Patriarchate and then participated in sessions of the Holy Synod.
- He returned from Constantinople in the morning. In the evening, he was present at the annual Gala Ball of the Hellenic Bankers' Society, held at Claridge's in Mayfair.
- In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of St. John the Theologian in Hackney on the occasion of one of its title feasts, being entertained to lunch by the Community afterwards. In the afternoon, he received Miss Melissa Birol.
- He left for Nottingham in the morning to preside at the conference of the Archdiocesan Clergy. At midday, he had lunch with the conferees at the hall of the church of the Mother of God 'The Merciful' in New Lenton, following which he presided at the Conference's first session, which he addressed on the subject 'The Holy Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain: Problems and Perspectives, Present and Future'. Later in the afternoon, he presided at the Conference's second session, following which he was present at Vespers celebrated at the church of the Mother of God. In the evening, he presided at the Conference's Formal Dinner, held at the Nottingham Gateway Hotel.
- In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of Ss. Cyril & Methodius in Huthwaite (Mansfield), afterwards presiding at the Conference's third session, held on the church's premises. After lunch at the church hall, he joined the conferees in visiting Newstead Abbey, the birthplace of Lord Byron, there celebrating a Trisaghion for the philhellene peer, a hero of the Greek War of Independence. Returning to Huthwaite, he was present at Vespers celebrated at the church there, being entertained to supper by the Community afterwards. He then returned to Nottingham.
- In the morning, he was present at the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the church of the Mother of God in New Lenton, following which he presided at the final session of the Conference. He returned to London in the late afternoon.
- In the morning, he presided at a Trisaghion in the Chapel of the Archdiocese for reposed members of the family of Spyros Metaxas. Afterwards, he received Savvas Charalambous. During the afternoon, he received Mrs. Annie Bertschi, Eduards Stiprais (Ambassador of Latvia), and Georgios Arghyris.
- At midday, he had lunch with Kypros Nicholas at a restaurant near his offices. During the afternoon, he received Andreas Avgoustis and Hieromonk Patrick Ramsey.
- In the evening, he was a guest at the Greek Evening organised yearly by the Community of the Holy Apostles in Brookman's Park (Hatfield), and held at Challoner School in Brookman's Park.
- In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of Ss. Cyril & Methodius in Huthwaite (Mansfield), during which he conferred the office of Protopresbyter on Oeconomos Phokas Hadjiloizis and that of Oeconomos on Father Elias Michael. Afterwards, he was entertained to lunch by the Community.
- At midday, he was a guest at the celebration of the 63rd Anniversary of the Independence of the State of Israel, held at the Park Plaza in Westminster. In the evening, he was a guest at Michael Christodoulidis' 90th birthday celebrations, held at the Greek-Cypriot Brotherhood.
- In the morning, he received Philios Grammenopoulos. At midday, he entertained Professor Richard Clogg & Dr. Charalambos Dendrinos to lunch. In the evening, he was present at the election of Cllr. Mrs. Lisa Rutter as Mayor of Barnet at the Town Hall, and at the reception there

held in continuation. Returning to Thyateira House, he presided at a meeting of the Trustees of the Community of St. Demetrios in Edmonton.

- During the morning, he received Miss Ioulia Oekiadou and Mesdames Panagiota Soulelé, Charoula Georgopoulou & Heleana Grigoriou. During the afternoon, he received Gregory & Christiana Wellington, Dionysios Pantazis, and Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia. In the evening, he was present at Anglican Evensong and an Ecumenical Reception held at Lambeth Palace under the auspices of the Nikaea Club.
- In the morning, he presided at the funeral of Mrs. Marika G. Hadjikyriakou at the church of St. Nicholas in Southampton, followed by the interment at the local cemetery (where he also read Trisagia for Orthodox Christians buried there).
- He received Mrs. Efthymia Tricha in the morning and Costas Christodidis, Miss Aphrodite Pavlou, and Ioannis Kyriakidis during the afternoon. In the evening, he received Andreas Ioannou, Georgios Kallis & Antonios Theodorou, and then visited k. Stavroula, a patient at St. Mary's Hospital Paddington.
- In the evening, he was a guest at the St. Helen's Ladies' Buffet Dinner & Dance, held at the Hall of the Community of Holy Cross & St. Michael the Archangel in Golders Green.
- In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of the Transfiguration of Christ the Saviour in Coventry, being entertained to lunch by the Community afterwards and where he presided at a meeting of the church council and the church's trustees. Returning to London, he was a guest at a dinner given at the Russian Embassy by the Ambassador & Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh to celebrate the Day of Slavic Writing and Culture.
- In the morning, he received Miss Anna Stacy-Altman. During the afternoon, he received two members of the Committee of the Community of Brighton & Hove (who were accompanied by Archimandrite Germanos Kourkounis), Michael & Tanya Turner, and Miss Polyxeni Nikolaou.
- He received Savvas & Stelios Volaris in the morning and Ioannis Kouvaras in the afternoon.
- In the morning, he received Ioannis Polykandriotis, Mrs. Ioulia Eerotokritou & Mesdames Eirini & Katerina Krimitsiou. At midday, he had lunch with Haris & Mary Sophokleidis at the La Genova restaurant in Mayfair.
- In the morning, he addressed an Inter-Faith Conference entitled "Exploring the Role of Faith in Public Life" at St. Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in London's Bishopsgate, organised under the auspices of Religions for Peace (United Kingdom). In the afternoon, he left London's Heathrow Airport for Prague, being received at the airport by His Beatitude Metropolitan Christofer.
- In the morning, he was taken to see some of the sights of Prague.
- In the morning, he participated as representative of His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch in the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Cathedral of Ss. Cyril & Methodius in Prague to mark the 5th anniversary of the election of Archbishop Christofer as Metropolitan of the Czech Lands and Slovakia and at which the metropolitan presided. Also participating were hierarchs representing the Patriarchates of Moscow, Romania, Bulgaria & Georgia and the Churches of Greece & Poland. He returned from the Czech Republic in the evening.
- In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of Ss. Mary & Marina in Longton (Stoke-on-Trent), being entertained to lunch by the Community afterwards. In the afternoon, he blessed the marriage of Constantinos Demetrios Markou and Jade Ella Mason at the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God & St. Andrew the Apostle in Birmingham, being present at the reception held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel afterwards.
- During the afternoon, he received Pantelis Haghiotis and Markos Elgohary.
- During the morning, he received the Hellenic Ambassador, Aristeidis Sandis, and Demetrios Salapatas. At midday, he entertained Georgios Orphanos & his daughter, Georgia, to lunch. In the afternoon, he received Dr. Iskra Koceva.

JUNE

- In the morning, he visited the studios of London Greek Radio. At midday, he entertained Mr. Papatolias to lunch. During the afternoon, he received Ioannis Pareas and Konstantinos Kalathos.
- In the morning, he presided at the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom in Bayswater, preaching the Word of God. During the

afternoon, he was interviewed by Miss Nina Dos Santos of C.N.N. (News), and received Aleksandr Nekrashov (who was accompanied by Zonas Bichenov).

3. In the early morning (and together with a group of pilgrims), he left for Turkey to visit churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Leaving London's Heathrow Airport, he flew first to Constantinople and from there to Izmir (Smyrna), from where he travelled to Denizli (near ancient Laodicea), spending the night there.
4. During the day, he visited the ruins of Laodicea and Hierapolis (Pamukkale), at the latter of which he saw the hot springs and the Martyrium of St. Philip. He again spent the night in Denizli.
5. In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of St. Photini in Smyrna and then saw something of the city that is so redolent with memories of its former glories and tragic history. He then travelled to Akhisar (Thyateira, the city from which he takes his episcopal title) in the afternoon, visiting the ruins of the ancient basilica in the centre of the town, offering prayers there for the Faithful of the Archdiocese, and spending the night there.
6. In the morning, he visited Pergamos (Bergama), where he saw the famous Classical temples and the 'Red Basilica', and Sardis (Sart Koy), with its Classical, Jewish and Christian sites, afterwards returning to Thyateira where he again spent the night.
7. In the morning, he visited Philadelphia (Alasehir), where he saw the remains of the C11 Christian church, before returning to Smyrna. From there, he flew to Constantinople, from the airport of which he went to the Patriarchate.
8. During the day, he participated in meetings of the Holy Synod. In the evening, he visited an exhibition entitled 'Greek Painters of Istanbul / Istanbul Rum Ressamlar', held in the Imperial Stables of Topkapi Palace Museum.
9. During the day, he participated in sessions of the Holy Synod. In the evening, he was present at Great Vespers in the Patriarchal church, celebrated for the (transferred) feast of Ss. Barnabas & Bartholomew.
10. In the morning, he was present at the Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Patriarchal church on the occasional of the nameday of His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomaeos (and at which he presided). Afterwards, he had the opportunity of congratulating His All-Holiness in the name of the Faithful of the Archdiocese. At midday, he was among those entertained by the Patriarch to a celebratory lunch at a restaurant. He returned from Constantinople in the evening.
11. In the evening, he was a guest at a Dinner given by the Greek Orthodox Community in Golders Green.
12. In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom in Bayswater and then presided at Kneeling Vespers there.
13. In the morning, he presided at the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom in Bayswater, preaching the Word of God. In the afternoon, he received Nikolaos Aemiliou (Director-General of the Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and who was accompanied by the Cyprus High Commissioner, Georgios Christophi & Georgios Georgiou.
14. Throughout the day, he participated in Informal Talks between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Anglican Communion, held at Lambeth Palace. Returning to Thyateira House, he received Georgios Tritos.
15. During the afternoon, he received Charalambos & Michaela Georgiou and Archimandrite Christodoulos Persopoulos.
16. At midday, he received Archbishop Gabriel of Comana and Archpriests John Marks & Alexander Fostiropoulos, afterwards entertaining them to lunch. During the evening, he received Garo Kehayan and Arghyrios & Nedi Hadjivassiliou.
17. In the morning, he presided at a meeting of the Pan-Orthodox Assembly's Educational Committee, afterwards entertaining the delegates to a buffet lunch. During the evening, he received Constantinos Papoglou and presided at a Trisagion for the late Mrs. Galatia Kalogherou in the Chapel of the Archdiocese.
18. In the morning, he received Constantinos Severis. In the evening, he presided at Great Vespers at the church of Ss. Anthony & John the Baptist in Holloway, during which he conferred the office of Oeconomos on Father Thomas Artemi. He also presented diplomas to students of the Arachne & St. Anthony's School of Iconography. In continuation, he opened an exhibition of photographs at the Cyprus Community Centre in Palmers Green devoted to Akanthou in Cyprus and was a guest at the Hellenic Medical Society's annual Dinner & Dance at the Hellenic Centre.
19. In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of St. Nicholas in Southampton that was followed by the 40-day Memorial Service for the late Mrs. Marika G. Hadji-Kyriakou. In continuation, he visited the cemetery for prayers at the graveside. He was entertained to lunch at George's Restaurant in Southampton.
20. In the afternoon, he received Mrs. Loxandra Kyriakidou. In the evening, he presided at a meeting of the St. Nicholas' Educational Trust.
21. He received Father Demetrios Kontelidis in the morning and Protopresbyter Joseph Paliouras & Miss Maria Briana in the afternoon. In the evening, he was present at a meeting of graduates of the Pan-Cyprian Gymnasium, held on the premises of the Greek-Cypriot Brotherhood in North Finchley.
22. He received Father Andreas Pittas in the morning and Father Ion Damalan & his presbytera during the afternoon. In the evening, he presided at a meeting of the Governors of St. Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary School in Thornton Heath (Croydon).
23. During the afternoon, he received the representatives of the committee of the Community in Leeds (together with the parish-priest, Father Samuel Kouspogheannis), Lakis Pierettis, and George Richards. In the evening, he presided at a meeting for the establishment of a Greek Orthodox Secondary School in North London.
24. He received Lambis Tsirigotakis in the morning and Inigo Woolfe & Ioannis Pareas and Archimandrite Theonas Bakalis during the afternoon.
25. In the afternoon, he received Diamandis Kouridis. In the evening, he blessed the opening of the Cyprus Wine Festival & Business Exhibition 2011 at the Great Hall of Alexander Palace.
26. In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of St. Catherine in Barnet, during the course of which he ordained Gregory Wellington to the Diaconate and was entertained to lunch by the Community afterwards. In the evening, he baptised Soterios, the infant son of Elliott Ashurst & Michelle Poulengeris in the Chapel of the Archdiocese, following which he was entertained to supper at the Aphrodite Restaurant (at which Professor Konstantinos & Aekaterini Svolopoulos were his guests).
27. During the afternoon, he received Miss Heleni Xanthopoulou, Efthymios Panzopoulos, and Demetrios Arghyris. During the afternoon, he visited Mrs. Daphne Eliadou (a patient at University College Hospital), and he received Miss Maria Vaghiena, and the clergy of the church of St. John the Baptist in Hornsey. In the evening, he presided at a meeting of the Trust of the Archdiocese.
28. In the morning, he presided at the funeral of Mrs. Angeliki Nikola at the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Camberwell. At midday, he received Father Apostolos Almaliotis. In the evening, he was present at a reception given by the Apostolic Nuncio at Archbishop's House in Westminster to celebrate the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI and the 60th anniversary of his priestly ordination.
29. In the morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of the Holy Apostles in Brookman's Park, during which he ordained Charalambos Georghiou to the diaconate, conferring on his the name of Petros. He was entertained to lunch by the Community afterwards.
30. In the morning, he presided by a concelebrated Pan-Orthodox Liturgy at the church of the Holy Apostles in Brookman's Park (Hatfield), on the occasion of its title feast. In continuation, the hierarchs and other clergy were entertained to lunch by the Community, following which he presided at a meeting of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in the British Isles.

**During the months of May and June,
His Eminence was represented by:**

Bishop Chrysostomos of Kyanea at the funeral of Ioannis Kontogiannis (10/6);
 Bishop Athanasios of Tropaeou at the Divine Liturgy at the church of Ss. Constantine & Helen in Upper Norwood (22/5), the Christian Brotherhood of St. Ambrosios' Dinner & Dance (5/6), a reception at the Hellenic Embassy in honour of the Great British Team for the 2011 World Summer Games of the Special Olympics to be held in Athens (6/6), a lecture delivered by Prof. Malcolm Evans at Lambeth Palace (8/6), the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of All Saints Camden Town (19/6);
 Protopresbyter Andreas Hadjisavvi at the Ashmole Independent Greek Schools' Dinner & Dance (18/6);
 Father Pavlos Gregoriat at the Greek Parents' Association's Music from the Greek Cinema (15/5);
 Deacon Meliton Oakes at a concert of Coptic Sacred Music entitled 'The Anointed Servant' (1/5), a Europe Day Concert at St. John's Smith Square (9/5), a lecture concerning the City of Alexandria at the Hellenic Centre (11/5), the Ionian Society's Heptanesian Spring Party (21/5), the midday & afternoon sessions of the Inter-Faith Conference at St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (26/5), the Annual General Meeting of the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (8/6), a reception for the British School at Athens, held in the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales (9/6), an Inter-Faith Dialogue-Seminar at London's Islamic Cultural Centre (16/6); &
 Deacon Konstantinos Theocharous at the presentation of a book by Sotos Zakhos at the Cypriot Community Centre (16/5).

Φωτογραφικά στιγμιότυπα από διάφορες εκδηλώσεις του Αρχιεπισκόπου



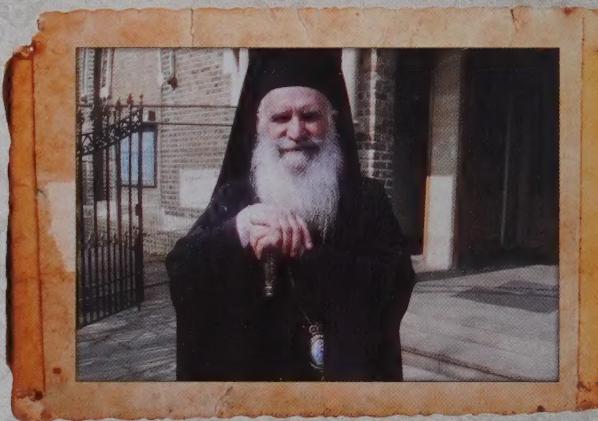
Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων και Μ. Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγόριος, Coventry, 22 Μαΐου 2011



Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων και Μ. Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγόριος, Coventry, 22 Μαΐου 2011



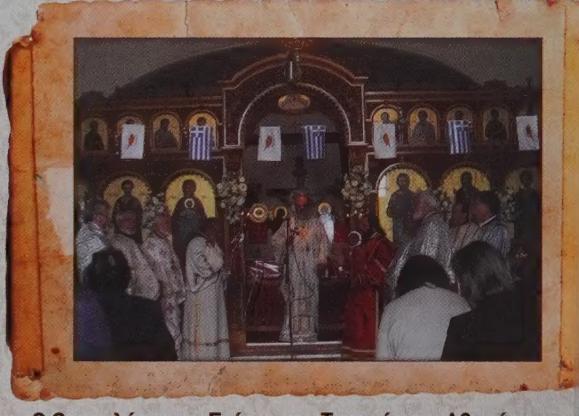
Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων και Μ. Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγόριος, Norwich, Μάιος 2011



Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων και Μ. Βρετανίας κ. Γρηγόριος, Καθεδρικός Ναός Κοιμήσεως της Θεοτόκου, Wood Green, 25 Μαρτίου 2011



Ο Θεοφιλέστατος Επίσκοπος Τροπαίου κ. Αθανάσιος, ο Γενικός Πρόξενος της Κύπρου κ. Γιώργος Γεωργίου (ομιλών) και ο Γενικός Πρόξενος της Ελλάδος κ. Ευθύμιος Παντζόπουλος (δεξιά καθήμενος), στους εορτασμούς της «Ημέρας της Κύπρου» που διοργανώθηκε επιτυχώς από τον Σύνδεσμο Ελληνορθοδόξων Κοινοτήτων στην Κοινότητα του Αποστόλου Βαρνάβα, Βορείου Λονδίνου.



Ο Θεοφιλέστατος Επίσκοπος Τροπαίου κ. Αθανάσιος κ. Ιερείς και Διάκονοι της Ιεράς Αρχιεπισκοπής Θυατείρων και Μεγάλης Βρετανίας, κατά την εορτή των Αγίων Αποστόλου Βαρνάβα και Βαρθολομαίου, στην Κοινότητα Αποστόλου Βαρνάβα Βορείου Λονδίνου.